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872 to go home because Grandmother would have sent him back for a double
792 beating, so he hitched up his longyi, tied his shirt round his head and
861 swam across the stream. One of the huts on the other bank belonged to
[775] a woman who had always been very fond of him because she believed
him to be a reincarnation of her brother who had died in childhood;
Burmese Buddhists believe that one goes through many existences on this
earth, and sometimes children are born who have not yet forgotten their
previous existence by the time they can talk; they adopt habits uncannily
like those of the departed member who, the fond and grieving relatives
hope, has returned to them in the guise of this new child; they say "My
bed", "My clothes" to the possessions of the dead person, especially if
eggs are not included in their diet, the belief being that eggs cause them
to forget. When we were very young, the fame of a wonder child, who
could recite the most learned religious passages untaught, spread through-
out Burma, and my parents travelled to hear him; he had been a monk
in his past existence and could remember.

792 My father's case was no outstanding one like this; he had just re-
561 sembled the lady's brother in looks and gesture, and a few childish utter-
ances helped out by her belief had endeared my father to her as having
been *winsa* (come in and inhabited) by her brother. The good and fond
lady received the boy with open arms, agreed that he was getting too old
for the monastery, and promised to go over and plead with my grand-
mother to take him out now and hasten his initiation ceremony into the
priesthood. This was achieved and my father went back to his mother's
house and prepared for the *shinbyu* as the ceremony was called.

484 The manner of his exit from the monastery, however, had made
177 him restless. During the short period he was free, he could go where
874 he willed, and in this way he often met traders who came and went be-
tween Ye and Tavoy, a seaport town about 100 miles away, to which
passenger and cargo ships from Moulmein made regular trips. One
day he was at the house on the opposite bank when a boy he used to know
as a toddler returned from Tavoy after a trip to Moulmein. This boy
could speak a few words of English. Moreover, he wore his hair in a
boha-dauk (a Westerner's crop) and seemed to think my father a jungle
boy. All the restlessness in my father flowed over then, because up to
now he had always felt himself clever and ahead of other boys. He
worried Grandmother to let him go to Moulmein and learn English, and
and get a job with the government which would bring them hundreds of
rupees each month. Other families who considered that Grandmother
had clever sons agreed that this would be a good idea; though none of
them had been to Moulmein and my father was still a boy, it would not
be so daring an adventure as it sounded, because there was some one

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among our relations in the village who had Anglo-Burman connections in Moulmein. These would put my father in school and look after him.

So after his shinbyu and his spell in the monastery, my father set off down the ye creek to catch a sailing boat of trader friends who, in their sailing ships called *kattu*, ventured as far as the Nicobar Islands and could sail to Moulmein in about seven days. His head was now cropped, and my grandmother had put a ruby ring on his finger; he was 16 years old, which was a very late age to start English schooling and pass it in time to get a good civil service job, but everyone at home thought he would do it easily for he had been the brightest boy in the monastery school.

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CHAPTER THREE

MY mother, as I have said, was the fair young jewel of her father's eye; and my grandfather had flashes of the most radical behaviour. Though he refused to learn English and this irreligious language was never spoken in his house, he suddenly decided to send my mother to learn English, not just as a second language, nor even to spend a few years at a totally English-speaking school—for an accomplishment, as a few other Burmese girls of the time did—but to study seriously until she passed the High School Standard of a European Code school which did all its teaching in English. My mother was thus the first Burmese Buddhist woman to pass the High School Examination in the European Code, and today she can speak faultless English though she never uses it unless necessary, and can even read some of the books of Virginia Woolf, although she does not like them. She and her two young brothers were sent to Moulmein; they stayed at the house of my eldest uncle who had settled there, and my mother attended an American Baptist Mission School. This was just before 1900.

My father, in the meantime, had arrived in Moulmein at the same time as my mother. The world had opened for him suddenly. After the strict and simple life of the monastery he found himself a smart young man with a Western crop and a collared shirt and outer jacket. He carefully put away his mother's ring to be put on again only on his visits back to Ye; he found a big and busy town to range in and no anxious mother waiting at home. I think it was during these years that my father got his love of all the sweet pleasures of life. A non-smoker and a teetotaller, he was one of the most spontaneously happy people. He loved food and many friends, to see young people happy and free from discipline, to spend all his resources in order to create happiness around him; he glorified the ability to think and work quickly and leave the maximum time for eating and laughing.

Particularly in this, Moulmein appealed to him. Having grown up in the monastic system of education by memorizing, he was bewildered at a system which prescribed a whole year of full-day studies for five or six thin text-books. As soon as he could read and understand he committed all his year's text-books to memory within a month, and could not conceive that there was anything else to be learnt unless they prescribed ~~text books~~ to be memorized. During school hours he wrote an Arith-

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around that we had meritoriously praised the Lord Buddha, and then touched the earth with the striker to pass the message to the spirits there also. These big bells may weigh up to 25 tons; the bell at Mingun is said to be the second largest in the world. They are all inscribed with lauds and invocations for the welfare of the donor. Gongs of brass are the bells of the town-crier; all announcements are punctuated with the striking of a gong. *Maung le htu tè* is the equivalent of "broadcasting it around the town". Much attention is paid to the melodiousness of gongs for the Burmese have a musical instrument called the *kyi-waing*, which is a circular frame on which graduated gongs are hung and beaten with a knobbed stick to harmonize with the rest of a Burmese orchestra.

There were numerous other objects for which my mother would never accept a substitute from English shops because they did not cater for our ingrained customs. Soup never tastes right when eaten with a metal spoon—we always used Burmese china spoons bought for about one anna each; rice is not to be stirred with a metal utensil either—the Burmese wooden ladle for this is the *yauing-ma*, the same word as for sister-in-law, the stirrer of trouble. There were, of course, particular places in Burma which supplied particular articles of dress, but I took an interest in this only when I was grown up.

What delights me is to find now that, in the imported things about the house also, all minkadaw households bought a standard type. This was probably due to the enterprise of Messrs. Rowe and Co., a Rangoon firm selling general goods, which established branches in all district towns to provide officers with anything they could not buy in native shops. We all bought Gold Medal camp chairs and camp cots from Rowe's. We bought durwan's kerosene lamps for bedrooms, Storm King and Petromax lamps with incandescent mantles for sitting and dining rooms, we bought crockery which came out in three or four good standard patterns, with an adaptation from the orthodox English dinner service to provide soup and curry dishes suitable for Burmese meals. We got cane furniture made in the local jails, odd chairs and always the half-wood half-cane stores box to serve on tours, and the long basket trays in which my father's files and papers would come home and go to the office every day, on the head of the *chapraasi*. The *hpas*, soft expandable cane boxes in which Burmese people pack their bedding when travelling, were always covered with green canvas from Rowe's. With these *hpas*, matching the Gold Medal camp cots and chairs, the boxes from the jails, a clerk and two or three girls looking after the children, and a general air of solicitous attention from the people around, no one could mistake an *a-so-ya* government official's family on its touring travels.

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593 always do so, at home and everywhere else, but mother understands
 177. that you make habits easily at your English school. Never walk into
 57 the house with your slippers on, as you do in the downstairs room
 here. When you eat with your grandmother and aunts, don't touch
 anything until your aunts have put a little of it into Grandmother's
 plate. And try not to talk to one another in English." All the way
 in the train my sisters would fling themselves at me and shout, "Big
 Elder Sister, Big Big Elder Sister."

528 We went to Ye during our summer holidays which were the longest
 592 in the school year and allowed us three weeks with my father and a
 264 month at Ye. It also enabled us to pay obeisance to our grandmother
 at the New Year, and to celebrate this loveliest of festivals in its most
 fitting surroundings. My Uncle San Lin usually sent his wife and our
 four small cousins at the same time, so that for one month in the year
 at least Grandmother could feel that the world of big towns and English
 civilization had not robbed her of any family affection. Sleeping and
 eating arrangements for the gathering of twenty odd people were
 no problems for the simple large-scale economy of the household. My
 mother had a bed, and beside it my Aunt Khin and all the children
 slept on thinbyus laid side by side on the platform upper storey. Meals
 were eaten in successive rounds at a low table on the kitchen floor, not
 served as separate sittings, but by calling more diners as places were
 vacated, and filling each dish that diminished from the stove near-by.

529 Half of our visit to Ye was spent at the garden where we were
 177 surrounded by rich fruits and could bathe in the clear swift water that
 rushed through islands of reeds. We walked and rode in bullock carts



for miles, to visit other gardens owned by Grandmother's friends—old
 men and women who lived there all the time, and who chuckled with
 delight to see us, for to them we were not ourselves, not ordinary

children such as were playing about them. We were ready-made re-
 productions sent back by my father and Uncle San Lin who disappeared
 into an unknown world many years ago. At house after house, and at
 the same houses year after year, we sat in a row on the benches they
 kept on the verandahs of all houses, eight children awkward and re-
 strained, while the old people peered and chuckled at us: "Yes, that is
 San Lin, all right—but there is Htwa Yin's nose; look at this expression, it
 is Maung Chit Kaing himself—oh but look here, here is the image of
 Maung Pyant, yes, exactly Maung Pyant, hullo you little Pyant, oh, look
 at her." This was my poor sister Mya Mya whose face seemed to be
 the quintessence of the features of my father and all his brothers and
 sisters. My sister Aye and I, who had the good fortune to take after
 my mother's family, were noticed very little during these visits, but
 my poor little Mya Mya sat there solemn and unhappy, thrusting her
 face out until even to us she looked comically like the forty-year-old aunts
 and uncles.

When I think back on eating the fruits of Grandmother's garden, they
 seem to have the quality of some heavenly ambrosia about them. They
 were all such luscious fruits. For example, the durian, the fruit
 which foreigners describe as smelling most foul, usually had in Ran-
 goon only a thin layer of the precious golden flesh around the seeds.
 In this garden we ate only *shwe-dinga* durians, gold-sovereign durians,
 whose flesh was so soft and full that a gold coin could be stood on edge
 on the seed and be buried in it. Moreover, the eating of durians in ex-
 cess was usually discouraged anywhere else, because of the heating
 qualities of the fruit, but here they grew beside the cooling mangosteen,
 which we always ate after the durian. This delicious fruit never
 travels successfully; even from district to district it gets bruised and
 stained. The mangosteen tree was most exciting to me as a child. It
 was full of dark foliage and the distilled nectar of the snow-white fruit
 seemed to be enclosed in bitterness and fraught with dangers, for the
 thick skin which contains tannin was bitter, its stain was indelible and to
 be kept carefully away from our clothes, and the fruit itself was said
 to be poisonous when eaten with sugar. This was owing to the belief
 that the sap of the rind made a toxic combination with sugar. Even the
 coconuts in Ye had a succulence about them. They were so abundant
 in the garden that we discarded all the fruit in which the meat had
 hardened beyond the *zun-chit*, the "spoon-scrape", stage when the
 flesh was of such tenderness that it could be scraped up with a spoon as a
 transparent jelly, to be put into the drink of coconut water. We were
 encouraged to drink this because it was said to make the heat "kick" and
 come out of the system. The grains of the pomeloes also were swollen

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becoming common. Borrowing money is always such a shameful thing 452
to Burmans that highly usurious rates prevail. The minimum rate of
these private money-lenders is Re. 1/8 per Rs. 100/- per month, i.e. 18%
per annum.

But this emphasis on money-making during the retirement period 181
was not pure avariciousness. It was connected with the ability to dis- 593
charge the duties of a parent and a good Buddhist during one's last years,
to have sufficient means to settle children in a good marriage, which is
one of the duties laid down for a good parent, and to make many donations
towards pagodas, resthouses and monasteries, all as a foundation for a
rebirth into a better existence.

For men like my father, this last period of their lives was a soft and 887
gentle immersion in the atmosphere which pervaded their childhood in 177
the monastery, and which had been banished into a memory with the
years of English education, government posts, courts and litigation, and
the rearing of children whose future must be bound up with the obtaining
of better government posts.

During these years, my father continued his daily prayers before 887
the altar, but they were short and he said them softly, his feet were shod 788
with shoes and socks, his tourings took him to headmen's houses more
often than to monasteries, his evenings were spent in playing tennis in- 593
stead of chinlon, and drinking lime-juice instead of coconut water, and
his houses of the regulation pattern were filled with cane furniture made 127.
by convicts in jails. What a far cry from the dim light on wooden 88
floors and pillars, the steady chorus of young monks at prayers. My
father, who during his working years had encouraged us to eat, laugh
and be merry in each present moment, now dismayed us with a sudden
conviction of the vanity of all worldly things, towns, society, dress and
ornament. We woke up at dawn to the sound of his prayers, and on 541
most mornings he walked out of the town to the hills where the monas-
teries and resthouses were gathered; he walked barefoot again with
great enjoyment in those quiet grounds, turned aside to supervise the
building of a *thein*, a house for the ordination and meditation of monks,
which he had persuaded a more wealthy friend to endow. He no longer
showered on us de luxe editions of Western encyclopaedias and the
collected works of Dickens and Scott as he used to, but bought richly
carved book cases and sacred books for the monasteries in Thaton. We
no longer ate our meals on chairs, sitting up at a table, but at a low round
table on the polished floor. My father sat cross legged, but he could
not go back to eating with his fingers, he still used a spoon and fork.
At nights we fell asleep to the sound of his prayers and it was like a bene-
diction. Buddhist prayers in Burma consist of two parts: the first is a

781 houses, for the niche shrines, if there are more than one at
 782 the pagoda, are always at the four cardinal points, and if there
 778 is only one, as is usual at small pagodas, it is to the East.
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781 The *sadā* is carefully kept by the parents until the child
 768 is old enough to take care of it himself, and thenceforward it
 is guarded as the most valuable possession the person has.
 No matter how often the name is changed the new one is
 never put in the *sadā*, so that this certificate cannot be
 trusted to implicitly for a man's name. Some of them are
 very beautifully engraved and ornamented, but they are
 naturally not often to be seen. I only know of two in
 England at the present time (1881), one of which is my own
 and the other belonging to a travelling Burman. When a man
 dies, the *sadā* is either destroyed or preserved as a memento
 by the family. A great many *sadās* were found and carried
 off as curiosities during the Third Burmese War. There is
 one at Abbotsford.

781 A curious instance of the firm belief of the nation in the
 436 reasonableness of the conviction that the planet under which
 643 one is born influences the fates and actions of one's life, is
 177 the fact that royalty ordained that the coins and measures
 used by traders should bear the emblem of the monarch's
 birthday. Thus for example all the gold coins used in Upper
 Burma bazaars during the penultimate reign had the figure of
 a lion on them, Mindôn Min having been born on a Tuesday.
 The few remaining from previous reigns bearing other sym-
 bols were rigidly kept out of the sight of Burmese officials.
 The Convenor of the Fifth Great Synod, though probably
 the mildest and best sovereign Burma ever had, would
 certainly have stood no trifling in matters of this kind, which,
 if not amounting actually to a part of the religion, were at
 any rate very intimately connected with it. His son Thibaw
 Min, however, notoriously indifferent to religion, if a stronger
 word might not even be admissible, let the old weights remain
 in use, and probably called it the march of civilisation.

852 The naming and the construction of the *sadā* being
 957 finished, the principal events in the youthful Burman's life
 [291] are over, and the children run about in as happy a state of
 nudity as the respectability of the family permits; and boys
 and girls steal grandmamma's cheroot, and potter about

tribute must be as gratifying as the loudest stamping of feet and whistling on fingers of a London theatre. In fact a Burman might perhaps be justified in doubting the enthusiasm and admiration which finds vent in whistling.

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The acting as a whole cannot be said to be satisfactory. The circumstances are against it. Who could "lose himself in his part" in the centre of a crowd of people all smoking and often talking? Moreover the subjects treated are so romantic and remote from ordinary worldly events that no one can be expected to realise them. Finally, who could keep it up for ten hours at a stretch? Nevertheless, individual passages are occasionally wonderfully well done. The piteous wailings and desolation of the princess; the majesty of the king; the grim savagery of the demon, are often very effectively delineated, while the clowns are almost invariably exceedingly clever. They are chosen for their ready wit, many of the jokes being extempore, as well as for their power of facial contortion. Caricatures of the performances of the other actors and comic songs form their chief stock-in-trade, and the text of the play is very far from being adhered to. It is an undoubted fact, if scarcely complimentary, that the clown has much more to do in the play and is very much broader in his jokes when Englishmen are present than when there is a purely national audience. The prolongation of the comic parts is due to a courteous desire to please the visitors, buffooneries being much more readily understood than high dramatic art, while the coarseness is unfortunately due to the same impression which makes a Burman always produce brandy and beer for the refreshment of a white man, the idea namely that that is what he likes best. None of the higher class troupes, more especially those from Upper Burma, will, however, condescend to this sort of thing.

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The company formerly was always made up in Mandalay, or said it was. There are other troupes, but it is usually taken for granted that they cannot be better than second-rate. The delta Burman is firmly persuaded that "far birds have fair feathers." In their humble phraseology they say, "In the Low Country we are not up in the humanities." This is not exactly complimentary to longer

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English rule and civilisation, but in one sense it is true. In Upper Burma every one is taught in the monasteries, and having no other relief from Pali doxologies, becomes saturated with the phraseology and ideas of the zāts. Thus, from the theatrical point of view, the Mandalay youth starts with a distinct advantage over the Lower Burman who potters away in lay and elementary Government schools over addition and multiplication and the sterilities of the First Reader. To qualify for the first ranks, therefore, the ambitious Peguer starts for the Royal City of Gems, practises as much as he can there, and watches the most celebrated players. Then, after a time, he obtains an engagement, and turns up in Rangoon as a quasi *anya tha*. The stage managers, usually old actors who have made some money and are inclined to take their ease, go up to Mandalay during the rains, when comparatively little is doing, the wet, combined with the four months of Lent, making pwēs few and far between. There they cast about and get together a company, entering into a written engagement with the actors, male and female, for the season, which lasts about seven months, from Ta'saungmôn to Nayôn (roughly, November to May). The manager makes all arrangements, and usually takes up his headquarters in some town or large village whence he can easily move to the surrounding places where the company may be wanted. The salaries paid are very good. A first-class prince or princess commands from 800 to 1000 rupees for the season. A good lubyet, or jester, will get five or six hundred. After these come the actors who take such parts as the king or the maids of honour. The dancers, that is to say, those who simply dance and do no more, get about sixty rupees; the *saingthama*, the musicians, receive forty. The company have not more than two or three rehearsals together before they commence their tour, but this does not matter much, because every one knows his part well, and the cue is not a matter of supreme importance. The *zat-ôk* (the manager) draws all the money from the performances. As much as 450 rupees have been paid for a two-night performance. This, however, was exceptional, and it was a marionette play with the great Maung Tha Byaw in the prince's part. Very few people

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the two are smashing away at one another with their long hair streaming over their faces and down their shoulders. Friends join in, and almost before you can realise what has happened, the actors disappear, the women and children run off home, and the street is filled with an excited crowd of men swaying backwards and forwards, and fighting promiscuously. For this reason pwe's are now never allowed in towns without permission from the civil authority, and numbers of policemen are always at hand to nip any riot in the bud. With the same object performances are only allowed in large towns about the time of the full moon, when there is abundance of light, in case the street lamps should be put out. The worst row of the kind I ever saw, however, was started by two of the Burman policemen themselves. They quarrelled about the merits of two apyodaws, talented *danses*, and the crowd, relishing the absurdity of the thing, backed up the quarrel with such energy that broken heads were plentiful and a ward in the infirmary was filled.

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Foreigners very often make the mistake of taking the performances of children's companies to be actual zāt plays. Even Captain Forbes, usually so accurate, falls into this error in speaking of a representation of the Wethandaya zāt. This must simply have been a yein, an adaptation of the great drama for performance by the little choral dancers. For people who do not understand Burmese well—among whom, of course, the late Captain Forbes was certainly not to be included—the mistake is very easy. They are far prettier to look at, and much preferable in every way to the actual text of the birth-story, mainly because they are not so dismally drawn out, and can ordinarily be got through in an evening.

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The dramas are all founded on the tales which Shin Gautama told of five hundred and ten of his previous existences, or on events in the lives of kings and heroes in India. None of them are original. The story in every instance is taken from the Hindoo; the adapter in most cases not even taking the trouble to nationalise the names of places and characters. It is only in the extemporising of the clown that anything really characteristic comes out. The Hindoo sense of humour is vastly inferior to the

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only from the stranger's land, but so many miles through alien waters, and so it was necessary to seek for another place. Where could a better be found than the mighty Irrawaddy itself? Accordingly from then on till there ceased to be a king of Burma, the necessary amount was drawn from the centre of the river by the Ye-kyi-wun, a minister specially appointed for that purpose.

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As in so many other cases the amenities of the thi'gyan pwè have led to the extorting of money. In the good old days, and in the country districts still, it was the practice for benevolent people to keep open house, and give food and dainties to all passers-by, with tea and flavoured drinks, cheroots and betel for those that preferred them. To lighten the expense, contributions, called kébo, were invited from friends and neighbours, and out of this has sprung the system of blackmail prevalent in Rangoon. A bevy of girls go into an Englishman's house and sprinkle him with lavender-water, or the moss-rose bouquet, so much in favour with Burmese belles. After a little badinage, they produce plain water, and threaten further operations unless something is given them. This they usually get, and if Englishmen complain of shameless extortion it is their own fault. The fair speculators are not such as any respectable girl would care to be seen with, and the prettinesses with scents are no more national than the scents are themselves. A provincial beauty would infinitely prefer a good honest ducking with vulgar water to the mawkish sentimentality of *eau de Cologne*. Some of the results of superior civilisation are very undesirable.

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On the final day of the feast a gun is fired at noon to signalise the ascent of the thi'gya min to his happy realms again, and then all is over. The squirts are laid by for another year; clothes are hung up to dry, and nothing remains but to wait and see whether the pōnnas are more successful than usual in their prognostications for the year.

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The origin of the custom is no doubt the rain-making, described by Professor J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, but the Burmese explain it by a legend. The thi'gya min had a bet with a rival and the loser lost his head. This could not be allowed to be defiled by touching the ground, so it was caught by a daughter of Natdewas. Seven of them take it

death). Captain, see this sword ; it is now three years since it has been constantly exercised in chastising my enemies ; it is indeed almost blunt with use ; but it shall be continued to the same till they are utterly dispersed. Do not talk of assistance. I require none. The Peguans I can wipe away as thus (drawing the palm of one hand over the other). See these arms and this thigh (drawing his loose coat-sleeve up to the armpit, and lifting his pasoh, so as to display a bare tattooed leg) ; amongst a thousand you cannot see my match. I can crush a hundred such as the King of Pegu." (Quoted from Crawford.)

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Two years later he talked to Ensign Lester in the same bombastic strain, telling him that he would go to Madras, and that if a nine-pounder shot was to hit him it could do him no harm, with a good deal more to the same effect. He is described at this time, when he was about forty-five years of age, as five feet eleven in height, and of a powerful build, with a long, but not a thin face, the expression not being improved by a number of smallpox pitmarks. He had a broad but very retreating forehead, a characteristic shared by all his descendants, and prominent in the case of King Mindôn.

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Alaungpaya, then, was no feeble founder of the present line of successors to the great Mahā Thamada. He certainly had the power to command, and his military successes carried the peacock flag from far away towards Dacca, down to the Siamese capital. Assuredly he was a worthy follower of the great first king, and the Burmese believed firmly in the unbroken character of the succession. Accordingly all the old Indian and Sakyan customs were carefully observed by the Burmese royal family. Such were the marriage with half-sisters, and the consequent preserving unmarried of the king's eldest daughter ; the reverence of the three most excellent animals, the peacock of the sun, the hare of the moon, and the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu, whose eyes like jewels look friendly on the stranger ; and the beithet, the consecration by pouring out of water at the accession. Marriage with half-sisters was only allowed to the king, not to the people at large, or even to the princes of the blood-royal. The throne was painted over with representations of

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the peacock and the hare, typifying the descent of the king from the solar and lunar races, which was also directly laid claim to in the title, *netwetbuyin*, sovereign of the rising sun. Similarly with the titles *khattia*, implying that he had dominion over the crops, and *yaza*, because he could instruct men in the laws, a somewhat doubtful ability in regard to all except perhaps King *Mindôn*. The consecration by *beittheit* was completed in three special ceremonies, as was the case with the *Payālaung* chosen to be the first ruler.

1. *Yaza-beit*, the consecrating of him as king.

2. *Manda beitttheit*, the solemn marrying him to a queen of royal lineage.

3. *Thenga beitttheit*, the confirmation or renewal of his engagement to abide by the laws, whereupon full powers for the government and administration of the country are conferred.

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The actual coronation ceremony was latterly a mere form, but was intended to mark the claim of the Lord of the Golden Palace to be the representative of the universal monarch, the *Sekyawadé* king, who never makes his appearance during the time allotted to the publication and duration of the religious institutions of a Buddha. It consisted principally in incantations and sprinkling with holy water from the Ganges, performed by the *pônna*s, the Brahmin astrologers; the Burman *yahans* had nothing whatever to do with it. Besides the *pônna*s, only a few of the chief ministers were present. The really national part of the ceremony was the royal progress round the city moat, made seven days after the *beittheit*. The king left the city by the Eastern Gate, the precise moment being notified by a discharge of cannon. He then entered the state barge, a most gorgeously gilt and carved construction, surpassing even the traditional coach of the Lord Mayor of London. This boat was then slowly rowed round the moat, with music clashing all around, and bands of dancers supplying the place of a rejoicing populace. Then when the circuit had been completed, the newly crowned monarch entered again between the guardian ogres of the Eastern Gate, a fresh salvo of artillery announcing the arrival at the palace. The ceremony was simple enough, but King

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The only analogy to the crown lands in Lower Burma was found in the reservation of forests by the government for the preservation of teak and other valuable trees such as the thit-ka (*Cedreela toona*), thit-kado (*Pentace Burmanica*), and padauk (*Pterocarpus Indicus*), which are absolutely reserved, that is to say, no tree may be felled which has not been girdled by government forest officers, even by those who have bought the right to remove the timber. It is expressly stated that the lessee is in no case allowed to girdle trees on his own account, and the rules are in other respects of the most stringent and Oriental description. No taung-ya, or hill-gardens may be made in the demarcated tracts. A selection of rivers and streams is made which must be kept free from all artificial obstructions, whether for fisheries, irrigation, or other purposes. Unauthorised felling, cutting, marking, killing, or injuring trees of all kinds, shrubs or bamboos, the collection of wood oil, resin, and even leaves, and any interference with the soil or its produce without permission, is made penal. Even the use of existing roads and bridle-paths may, if the forest officer sees fit, be prohibited. In 1882, out of a total area of about 80,000 square miles of teak-producing forests, some 13,000 square miles were thus reserved, but this area has now been ten times exceeded. The Burman, who knows nothing whatever of game laws or edicts against trespassers, is inclined to look upon this stringent reservation of land which the ancient code declares free for all, as something far more despotic than the enforced labour and extortionate demands of national rule. Doubtless time will prove to him that it is a wise precaution to guard from destruction a slow-growing tree like the teak, and when the wandering hunter gets to understand that forest fires are a calamity and not simply an easy method of making a clearing, the State forests will come to be something less like pheasant coverts than they now are.

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Otherwise, waste lands, as in old Upper Burma, are by the law of the Dhammathat open to all-comers. Any one can select for himself a tract of such land at his pleasure, and may clear and cultivate in any way he chooses, paying his tax upon it when the time for the annual assessment of land revenue comes round. In many cases, however, he is allowed

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to believe that the two notes he mentioned had been inserted in the way he mentioned. Hornbostel's *échelle birmane* stands in the way. Much more seems to have happened to the Burmese scale than the insertion mentioned by Paul Edmonds. To continue:

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The tuning of the gongs, as I rather anticipated, was similar to the tuning of the *pattala*. . . . The drum-circle, however, was tuned, I was excited to find, in the pentatonic scale; there was no F and no B, with the exception of an F in the top octave of all. (See Examples 1, 2, 3). My discovery of the pentatonic tuning of the drum-circle fairly convinced me that the pentatonic scale is, as I had already begun to suspect, the foundation of Burmese music. And when I came to re-examine the two tunes which I had thought showed no signs of pentatonic origin, I found one significant point which I had previously overlooked— all the cadences were pentatonic, and there was no cadence in which the leading-note B appeared as the penultimate note.

Examples 1, 2, and 3 will show that Paul Edmonds' tuning of the drum-circle does not agree with U San Win's. But that will be because the modern drum-circle has had added to it three more drums. And perhaps it has also become sophisticated, as oriental ears have unconsciously become with the western diatonic major scale. In the beginning the drum-circle was not even a circle. It was a semi-circle, called  (*ta-chan-saing*) half-moon-band, the tuning of which could not be but pentatonic, to supply the ground notes of the tunes. The most characteristic (*the first violin*), among Burmese musical instruments is the *hnè*, Burmese oboe, whose limitless flexibility of tone has now been overwhelmed by the blustering gusto of the completed drum-circle. (See Diagrams 2 and 3). Although only one octave is shown in the diagrams, notes of the octave above are easily obtained by lipping and overblowing. Actual blowing of the *hnè* in diagram 3 side by side with the modern oboe (new philharmonic pitch) shows that the lowest note of the *hnè* corresponds to the lowest A of the oboe, and the *hnè*'s highest practicable note corresponds to the oboe's highest E, i.e. third line above the treble staff. The natural scale of the *hnè* is D pitched one octave higher.

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The *bawlè* Paul Edmonds heard might not have had any cadence which was not pentatonic. Nowadays it has too many things. Worse offenders than Hla Tin have with their variations, *fioritura* and *bravura* twisted its characteristic cadence out of all recognition. But there certainly are any amount of pentatonic cadences in Burmese music. In fact, an improvisation strictly on the black keys of the piano sounds more Burmese than many a modern Burmese song.

His statement that the Burmese band, owing to the fixed scale of the gong-circle, always played in one key, C major—approximately, is very significant, though the reason, as will be seen later,

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in Europe. Indeed the Buddhist religion so frowns upon music that it was practised rather shamefacedly and its devotees are often called *Phet-khwet-sa* (Eaters out of leaves), i.e. vagabonds. Even so recently as last year a learned old Burmese gentleman loth to depart this life without imparting all of his Burmese learning concluded a series of Burmese articles on Burmese music and dancing with an apology for having at all indulged in such frivolities.

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Music found in the irrepressible gaiety of the Burmese people a fertile soil and it let its roots deep into the soil, and soon from occupational songs music developed into an art-form which finally invaded the towns, the capital and the royal palace. There it received fresh impetus from a system of competitive patronage in which the king himself joined with his own band. There also, apparently it received its classical nomenclature. Names which sound imposing enough—*ဓမ္မ ဖန္တ ဝါဒ ဘိဇ္ဇာ* etc. *Svara*, *Marchana*, *Grāma*, *Cruti* etc.—but meant for quite different things, must have been borrowed in their entirety for the sake of their classical origin, so that the names were not in accordance with what they stood for, even as the Greek names, by which the western ecclesiastical modes were distinguished, were not in accordance with those of the ancient Greek octave system from which the names were taken. Thus it seems Burmese musical theory in the classical manner is a grafted dignity which dignifies but does not apply. Indeed it seems yet to be written.

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However, to go on with Mariano: "Pure Burmese melodies are beautiful in themselves. But on account of the preponderance of grace-notes (*mordente*, *acciaccatura*, *appoggiatura*) Europeans find it difficult to catch Burmese tunes." This is very true, but not true enough. Ornament in Burmese music does something more than preponderate. They themselves are an inherent part of the tunes. That is why when a Burmese song is taken down by a western musician and reproduced, the ornaments having been unappreciated and eschewed the 'tune' that remains no longer sounds Burmese. Fox Strangways explains succinctly:

"We think of grace-notes as something which may but need not be added to the note, not as something actually inherent in it. If cultivated for their own sake or used at all in excess they are regarded by us as meretricious.....Indian 'grace' is different in kind. There never is the least suggestion of anything having been 'added' to the note which is graced. The note with the grace makes one utterance. The object of grace is, of course, to add importance to the particular note, but there are such varying degrees in which this may be done

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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clouds of dust. The Rainy Season begins sometime late in May or early in June and lasts until October. Almost all of Tadagale's 90 to 100 inches of annual rainfall comes during this period. It rains every day, in periodic downpours which often start so suddenly that the newcomer to the area is caught unaware on a good many occasions. Although temperatures drop during the Rainy Season to daily maxima in the low 80's, the discomfort, for the average denizen of the temperate zone, is greater than in the Hot Season because of the extremely high humidity and the small difference between daily maximum and minimum temperatures.

The Burmese inhabitants of the community, who are 90% of the population, are medium brown in skin color, tend to be broad-nosed, have straight black hair, and are of medium stature.

All of the men, with the exception of a few of the old ones, wear their hair in western style, cut short and parted on one side. The women, however, adhere to the traditional Burmese hair styles, without exception. Little girls wear their hair in a top-knot on the middle of the head, with a circular part around the temples and crown, short bangs hanging down in front. Adult women comb their hair, liberally oiled, back to form a coiled knot at the nape of the neck. Adherence by the women to traditional hair styles and mode of dress is strikingly in contrast with the situation in neighboring Thailand, where permanent waves and short skirts may be seen among peasant women many miles outside the capital.

Burmese dress is universal in the village. It consists of the longyi, a circular, single-seamed skirt reaching to the ankles, and a jacket. The longyi is worn by both sexes. The woman's longyi differs from the man's in that it has a black waistband sewn to the upper edge. It is folded over and tucked in at the waist. The man's longyi is drawn tight about the waist and knotted in front to hold it in place. Women's jackets (the aingyi) are not quite so loose-fitting as men's, and for dress occasions they are made of fine muslin, or, if it can be afforded, sheer nylon, climate notwithstanding. Men's jackets are of a heavier material, and are never worn at the workaday tasks of everyday life in the village; the men generally go unclad from the waist up. For ordinary wear both sexes use wooden clog-like shoes, held to the foot by a single band of rubber over the in-step. For dress occasions, single-thonged leather sandals are worn.

About nine hundred people live in Tadagale. Census data collected at first-hand do not yield exact information because a few families could not be interviewed. The data include 807 people, and it is doubtful if as many as one hundred people were not covered by the census.

In Table I below the population of the village is given in terms of ethnic groups. The imposition of any a priori set of categories was avoided, and informants were simply asked the question, "To what people do you consider yourself to belong?" In this way it was possible to learn something of the group identifications of informants.

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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Puberty and Adolescence. The Burmese view, in the village, is that one is an adult when one becomes physiologically mature. Upon reaching pubescence boys as well as girls are referred to by a term which means 'virgin.' The connotation is that the individual has now entered a period of life in which the dangers of temptation are especially great and in which correspondingly greater precautions are necessary. 881

A girl's first menstruation is believed to cleanse her system; frequently, such phenomena as eruption of the skin or sexually delinquent behavior preceding the first menstrual period are regarded as evidence that the 'blood is trying to flow.' Although the idea of uncleanness is associated with menstruation, there is no segregation of the girl or any particular fear of contamination. So long as she conducts herself with propriety and modesty a girl is free to move in public at this time. 881 891

Ideally, the attainment of puberty is the time for the girl's ear-piercing ceremony, but in actual practice this often takes place as early as her seventh or eighth year-- if it occurs at all. There is a tendency for this ceremony to be omitted in Tadagale. Since it is a feast occasion involving considerable expense to her family, the trend is towards holding a single ceremony, at which several girls who are related will have their ears pierced. The initiate is dressed for this occasion in the traditional garb of the Burmese Court, and also wears a spired-helmet type of head dress. The villagers gather at the family house for the event. An elderly woman rubs an anaesthetic plant substance on the girl's ear lobes and pierces them with gold pins. These pins are left in the ears, bent back. Later, if larger holes are desired, rolled leaves may be inserted. The family presents gifts to the assembled guests; often these are conventionalized tokens, such as inscribed cigars or fans. 852

On the same occasion boys of approximately the same age may be initiated into the Buddhist monkhood. 881 792 369 177

Boys' Initiation. For Burmese boys one of the most important events is initiation as a novice into the Buddhist monkhood. The traditional rite of shinbyu continues to be an important part of Burmese culture, in the urban as well as the rural setting. In the towns and cities, of course, it has been affected by the greater contact with western culture; the procession, for example, is likely to take place in automobiles rather than on horseback and on foot. Nevertheless, city-bred as well as rural Burmese feel it is very important for social as well as religious reasons that their sons be initiated; and everywhere the shinbyu involves large expenditures if not great sacrifices, requires the services of many people for its planning and carrying out, and is the occasion par excellence for joyous celebration as well as religious solemnity.

No two shinbyu ceremonies are the same in detail. The circumstances of the sponsoring families, the physical setting, the idiosyncrasies of individual monks all make for variation. Here we shall indicate the main features of the initiation ceremony as observed in Tadagale. 881 792

The ceremony proper is held on the open-sided ground floor of a wooden building, in the upper portion of which the monks and their pupils live. On the south side of this room is a platform raised about three feet above the ground, on which the monks sit during the proceedings. The room is decorated with various hangings, tapestries, and net curtains; the floor is covered with mats and carpets. Four tables front the platform, on which are placed various

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651 merchant as much as fifty or sixty. The assessment
621 was levied according to the means of the villagers.
So well was this done, that complaints against the
decisions of the assessors were almost unknown—I
might, I think, safely say were absolutely unknown.
The assessment was made publicly, and each man
was heard in his own defence before being assessed.
Then the money was collected. If by any chance,
such as death, any family could not pay, the de-
ficiency was made good by the other villagers in
proportion. When the money was got in it was
paid to the governor.

674 Crime such as gang-robbery, murder, and so on,
627 had to be reported to the governor, and he arrested
177 the criminals if he felt inclined, and knew who they
were, and was able to do it. Generally something
was in the way, and it could not be done. All
lesser crime was dealt with in the village itself, not
only dealt with when it occurred, but to a great
extent prevented from occurring. You see, in a
village anyone knows everyone, and detection is
usually easy. If a man became a nuisance to a
village, he was expelled. I have often heard old
Burmans talking about this, and comparing these
times with those. In those times all crimes were
unpunished, and there was but little petty crime.
Now all big criminals are relentlessly hunted down
by the police; and the inevitable weakening of the
village system has led to a large increase of petty
crime, and certain breaches of morality and good
conduct. I remember talking to a man not long
ago—a man who had been a headman in the king's
time, but was not so now. We were chatting of

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GOVERNMENT

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various subjects, and he told me he had no children ; they were dead.

'When were you married?' I asked, just for something to say, and he said when he was thirty-two.

'Isn't that rather old to be just married?' I asked. 'I thought you Burmans often married at eighteen and twenty. What made you wait so long?'

And he told me that in his village men were not allowed to marry till they were about thirty. 'Great harm comes,' he said, 'of allowing boys and girls to make foolish marriages when they are too young. It was never allowed in my village.'

'And if a young man fell in love with a girl?' I asked.

'He was told to leave her alone.'

'And if he didn't?'

'If he didn't, he was put in the stocks for one day or two days, and if that was no good, he was banished from the village.'

A monk complained to me of the bad habits of the young men in villages. 'Could government do nothing?' he asked. They used shameful words, and they would shout as they passed his monastery, and disturb the lads at their lessons and the girls at the well. They were not well-behaved. In the Burmese time they would have been punished for all this—made to draw so many buckets of water for the school-gardens, or do some road-making, or even be put in the stocks. Now the headman was afraid to do anything, for fear of the great government. It was very bad for the young men, he said.

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VIII CRIME AND PUNISHMENT 101

community over the individual—the restraining influence of public opinion and of religion is greater. But even during the years of trouble, the years from 1885 till 1890, when, in the words of the Burmese proverb, 'the forest was on fire and the wild-cat slapped his arm,' there were certain peculiarities about the criminals that differentiated them from those of Europe. You would hear of a terrible crime, a village attacked at night by brigands, a large robbery of property, one or two villagers killed, and an old woman tortured for her treasure, and you would picture the perpetrators as hardened, brutal criminals, lost to all sense of humanity, tigers in human shape; and when you came to arrest them—if by good luck you did so—you would find yourself quite mistaken. One, perhaps, or two of the ringleaders might be such as I have described, but the others would be far different. They would be boys or young men led away by the idea of a frolic, allured by the romance of being a free-lance for a night, very sorry now, and ready to confess and do all in their power to atone for their misdeeds. Nothing, I think, was more striking than the universal confession of criminals on their arrest. Even now, despite the spread of lawyers and notions of law, in country districts accused men always confess, sometimes even they surrender themselves.¹ I have known many such cases. Here is one that happened to myself only the other day.

A man was arrested in another jurisdiction for cattle theft; he was tried there and sentenced to

¹ This was written in 1896. In 1902 it is very different. The increase of all forms of perjury and false evidence is universal.

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will guard her breath as it passes her lips to and fro, lest she awaken him whom she fears.

'And she will remember that when he awakens he will have certain wants. She will be anxious that the bath be to his custom, that his clothes are as he wishes, that his food is tasteful to him. Always she will have before her the fear of his anger.'

It must be remembered that the Laws of Manu are of Indian origin, and are not totally accepted by the Burmese. I fear a Burmese girl would laugh at this ideal of a wife. She would say that if a wife were always afraid of her husband's wrath, she and he, too, must be poor things. A household is ruled by love and reverence, not by fear. A girl has no idea when she marries that she is going to be her husband's slave, but a free woman, yielding to him in those things in which he has most strength, and taking her own way in those things that pertain to a woman. She has a very keen idea of what things she can do best, and what things she should leave to her husband. Long experience has taught her that there are many things she should not interfere with; and she knows it is experience that has proved it, and not any command. She knows that the reason women are not supposed to interfere in public affairs is because their minds and bodies are not fitted for them. Therefore she accepts this, in the same way as she accepts physical inferiority, as a fact against which it is useless and silly to declaim, knowing that it is not men who keep her out, but her own unfitness. Moreover, she knows that it is made good to her in other ways, and thus the balance is redressed. You see, she knows her own strength and her own weak-

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heard of it ; and although I thought my heart would break, I did not say anything. I told my husband, "Bring her here, let us live all together ; it will be best so." I always did for the best, thakin. So he brought her, and she came to live with us a week ago. Ah, thakin, I did not know ! She tramples on me. My head is under her feet. My husband does not care for me, only for her. And to-day, this evening, they went out together for a walk, and my husband took with him the concertina. As they went I could hear him play upon it, and they walked down through the trees, he playing and she leaning upon him. I heard the music.'

Then she began to cry bitterly, sobbing as if her heart would break. And the sunset died out of the sky, and the shadows took all the world and made it gray and dark. No one said anything, only the woman cried.

'Thakin,' she said at last, 'what am I to do? Tell me.'

Then my friend spoke.

'You can divorce him,' he said ; 'you can go to the elders and get a divorce. Won't that be best?'

'But, thakin, you do not know. We are both Christians ; we are married for ever. We were both at the mission-school in Rangoon, and we were married there, "for ever and for ever," so the padre said. We are not married according to Burmese customs, but according to your religion ; we are husband and wife for ever.'

My friend said nothing. It seemed to him useless to speak to her of the High Court, five hundred

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miles away, and a decree nisi ; it would have been a mockery of her trouble.

'Your husband had no right to take a second wife, if you are Christians and married,' he said.

'Ah,' she answered, 'we are Burmans; it is allowed by Burmese law. Other officials do it. What does my husband care that we were married by your law? Here we are alone with no other Christians near. But I would not mind so much,' she went on, 'only she treads me under her feet. And he takes her out and not me, who am the elder wife, and he plays music to her; and I did all for the best. This trouble has come upon me, though all my life I have always acted for the best.'

There came another footstep up the stair, and a man entered. It was her husband. On his return he had missed his wife, and guessed whither she had gone, and had followed her. He came alone.

Then there was a sad scene, only restrained by respect for my friend. I need not tell it. There was a man's side to the question, a strong one. The wife had a terrible temper, a peevish, nagging, maddening fashion of talking. She was a woman very hard for a man to live with.

Does it matter much which was right or wrong, now that the mischief was done? They went away at last, not reconciled. Could they be reconciled? I cannot tell. I left there next day, and have never returned.

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There they had lived for many years among their own people, far away from the influence that had come upon their childhood, and led them into strange ways. And now all that was left of that influence

XVII

DIVORCE

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was the chain that bound them together. Had it not been for that they would have been divorced long ago; for they had never agreed very well, and both sides had bitter grounds for complaint. They would have been divorced, and both could have gone their own way. But now, what was to be done?

That is one of my memories: this is another.

There was a girl I knew, the daughter of a man who had made some money by trading, and when the father died the property was divided according to law between the girl and her brother. She was a little heiress in her way, owning a garden, where grew many fruit-trees, and a piece of rice land. She had also a share in a little shop which she managed, and she had many gold bracelets and fine diamond earrings. She was much wooed by the young men about there, and at last she married. He was a young man, good-looking, a sergeant of police, and for a time they were very happy. And then trouble came. The husband took to bad ways. The knowledge that he could get money for nothing was too much for him. He drank and he wasted her money, and he neglected his work, and at last he was dismissed from government employ. And his wife got angry with him, and complained of him to the neighbours; and made him worse, though she was at heart a good girl. Quickly he went from bad to worse, until in a very short time, six months, I think, he had spent half her little fortune. Then she began to limit supplies—the husband did no work at all—and in consequence he began to neglect her; they had many quarrels, and her tongue was sharp, and matters got worse and worse until they

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586 'I did not know,' she said; 'I was hot-tempered. I was foolish. But now I know. Ah! the house is so lonely! I have but two ears, I have but two eyes, and the house is so large.'

But the husband refused again.

'What is done, is done. Marriage is not to be taken off and put on like a jacket. I have made up my mind.'

[762] Then he went away, and after a little the woman went away too. She went straight to the big, lonely house, and there she hanged herself.

You see, she loved him all the time, but did not know till too late.

Men do not often apply for divorce except for very good cause, and with their minds fully made up to obtain it. They do obtain it, of course.

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647 With this facility for divorce, it is remarkable how uncommon it is. In the villages and amongst respectable Burmans in all classes of life it is a great exception to divorce or to be divorced. The only class amongst whom it is at all common is the class of hangers-on to our Administration, the clerks and policemen, and so on. I fear there is little that is good to be said of many of them. It is terrible to see how demoralizing our contact is to all sorts and conditions of men. To be attached to our Administration is almost a stigma of disreputableness. I remember remarking once to a headman that a certain official seemed to be quite regardless of public opinion in his life, and asked him if the villagers did not condemn him. And the headman

[554] answered with surprise: 'But he is an official'; as if officials were quite *super grammaticam* of morals.

Yet this is the class from whom we most of us obtain our knowledge of Burmese life, whom we see most of, whose opinions we accept as reflecting the truth of Burmese thought. No wonder we are so often astray.

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Amongst these, the taking of second, and even third, wives is not at all uncommon, and naturally divorce often follows. Among the great mass of the people it is very uncommon. I cannot give any figures. There are no records kept of marriage or of divorce. What the proportion is it is impossible to even guess. I have heard all sorts of estimates, none founded on more than imagination. I have even tried to find out in small villages what the number of divorces were in a year, and tried to estimate from this the percentage. I made it from 2 to 5 per cent. of the marriages. But I cannot offer these figures as correct for any large area. Probably they vary from place to place and from year to year. In the old time the queen was very strict upon the point. As she would allow no other wife to her king, so she would allow no taking of other wives, no abuse of divorce among her subjects. Whatever her influence may have been in other ways, here it was all for good. But the queen has gone, and there is no one left at all. No one but the hangers-on of whom I have spoken, examples not to be followed, but to be shunned.

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But of this there is no manner of doubt, that this freedom of marriage and divorce leads to no license. There is no confusion between marriage or non-marriage, and even yet public opinion is a very great check upon divorce. It is not considered right to

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CLOTHINGClothing Habits

The standard garments worn by U Myaing consist of a longyi which reaches from his waist to his ankles, a shirt or a vest for his upper torso, slugs or slippers for his feet. Head covering is seldom worn but for every-day purpose would be a western style hat or a bamboo topes. For special occasions the GAUNG BAUNG would be worn. When U Myaing works he takes off his shirt and vest because, he said, otherwise he would have no other shirt to wear afterwards. In Pantaw, when they went to PMS (stage performances) and festivals he had on a vest, a shirt, and a jacket.

"Sometimes, when I feel that way, I wear these at home even though I do not intend to see the PMS. It is just because I am in the habit of wearing them. At night I sleep in my vest. When it is cold, I pull on a shirt over that. In the daytime ordinarily I wear vest, shirt and cotton longyi. Here in the camp I cannot wash my shirt and vest very often - I do so only when they have become soiled, not at regular intervals of time. But the shirt becomes soiled every three or four days and the vest every two days or so. On the other hand I possess three longyis and wash each of them after one wearing, when I have a bath."

The females of the family habitually wear a women's longyi sometimes called a NYA-MEIN, extending from the waist to the ankles slugs or slippers and an KIN-GHI over a bodice for the upper torso. The two younger children wear western style frocks. The specific items worn are given below. The clothing items may be organized into two headings, one dealing with U Myaing's clothing, and the second with the clothing of the remaining (female) members of the family.

U Myaing's Clothing.

COTTON LONGYI (Cotton Longyi): — The LONGYI is a piece of cloth reaching from the waist to the ankles. It is stitched so as to be cylindrical in form, somewhat wider than twice the girth of the individual. The patterns are most frequently squared and of different colours resembling the scotch tartan closely. Men's colours are dark or pastel colours mainly. It is secured about the waist with several bands one upon the other in the front midline. Ceremonial LONGYIS are wider than those of ordinary use giving a fold of 6 to 8 inches in front.

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Analysis of wearing a parcel used by U Myaing's family.

Fifty three items of wearing apparel and personal accoutrement were recorded. These are divided into three large categories:

- (1) Objects used in Pathwe but not in camp.
- (2) Objects used in camp but not in Pathwe.
- (3) Objects used in both localities.

Twenty nine items used in Pathwe were not used in camp. 55%

of the Pathwe complex had been discontinued for a variety of reasons. The bulk of the objects were not replaced due to lack of funds. Many items such as umbrellas, towels, leather sandals were needed and desired. Some objects, such as men's jackets, headbands, silk longyi and associated underwear pants, men's bamboo hats, men's hair dressing comb, jewelry and parasols are recognized as luxury items. Both the ceremonial and social occasions in which such luxuries assumed the proportions of necessities had diminished or disappeared so that the desire for them is no longer as strong. This is reflected in the statements that some of the luxuries were no longer desired (hair dressing) or that smaller quantities (silk longyi) would be adequate.

It is interesting to note that whereas both U Myaing and the ladies had the same number of items in Pathwe (26 respectively) - in camp U Myaing has only 7 items or 28% of the Pathwe complex. The ladies, however, have 16 items or 59% of the Pathwe complex. This data suggests that the women's standards are less flexible than the men's. In order to be respectable the women have to have certain items. Whereas, U Myaing's demand depends more on his immediate situation. If this is so, then it follows that the men's standard might expand more rapidly under opulent conditions - with sets of special socio-ceremonial garb (headband, silk longyi, jacket, jewelry including western items (Gillette razor, topee, western jackets and shirts).

Only three objects were used in camp but not in Pathwe. The rubber-tyred wooden sandals are simply new varieties of an old form used in Pathwe - a cheap and popular urban form due to abundance of tyre-rubber following the war. The earrings with white stones and set of silver buttons are also substitute varieties, not innovations.

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length) draped over one shoulder. The PUM, part of the scarf, still draped, is placed on front of the worshipping woman for her head and hands as she bows. The beads, a string about 2 feet long made of black lacquer or of red or white beads about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter are called KHE-PA-DWE (count-beads). They are worn about the neck when not in use, and are "counted" by the fingers of one hand. Each bead, thus counted calls to the worshipper's mind a vision of Buddha as she says ARA HAHN (God) in a low voice. While in this dress women do not decorate their hair with flowers or wear jewelry or cosmetics as such would be unseemly.

The older men and other religious men (who are gathering alms as members of Buddhist lay societies) wear a loose white robe over a white jacket, white head band, praying bead necklace, and a chocolate coloured scarf draped over one shoulder. The general public must wear their very best clothes for religious festivals but the women do not use cosmetics. "Rangoon Sabbath" is the term applied to the less strict observations of the town people who may appear with a little THANAKA or other cosmetics. The marriage dress of the bride is an older form of costume involving use of a long split skirt with out-flaring jackets.

The hair styles are important and denote age and sex. Children of both sexes wear their hair in a knot at the top of the head with a fringe of short hair like a bowl below. The older man's style was long hair knotted on one side in the back of the head; except in villages this has been superseded by the western short crop ranging from a long "pompadour" to short "crew cuts" - the latter being rarer and more modern. Old men wear very short cropped hair or are shaven - as the Pongyis and nuns. Maidens wear their hair in elaborately woven tresses - earlier on top of the head in a disc-shawl - now in chain braids at the back of the head. False switches of hair are commonly used. Flowers are used as decoration on all occasions. The usual style for married ladies is a knot at the back of the head wound around a rectangular comb of wood, (common) tortoise shell, ivory or gold. Older and married women sometimes appear in an ancient ceremonial style consisting of the hair wrapped around a fiber cylinder

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on top of the head. Scented hair oil is used by both sexes on special occasions.

The HTAMKIN is regarded as "unworthy" for a man to touch. A severe insult is for a wife to request her husband to bring her HTAMKIN or to wash it. Drying HTAMKINS in the front of the house is never allowed; and it is strictly forbidden for this garment to touch any pongyi utensils. Parents instruct their boys never to pass under the strings of a line of which HTAMKINS are drying as such is thought to take away the masculine powers, and render the tattooed charms ineffective. Men and women's clothes are washed and stored separately.

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When a son neglects his mother after marriage she will complain with rage that he has not come out of the HTAMKIN and is under the HTAMKIN government of his wife.

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Women usually wear solid black HTAMKINS during menstruation. Boys, in jest, inform one of their companions that he may now become serious when the girl of his choice appears in a black dress for the first time.

Slippers of both sexes are regarded as "dirty" objects and are left outside of the houses. They are strictly prohibited in pagoda enclosures and land. When a girl is angry at a teasing boy (or quarrelling with a woman) she will threaten to slap his face with her sandal. This is a double insult since the head is regarded as a particularly sacred part of the body. Barbers must ask permission and apologise for touching the heads of their customers.

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Western clothing has a higher status than Burmese clothing in certain situations and on certain occasions especially where western people are present in suits. However, for most occasions, everyday or special, the Burmese costume is preferred. When abroad the Burmese men usually wear western garb. The wearer of western clothes is often open to the taunt that he is "Bo Qyi (term for Englishman) made in Burma". There is a strong feeling in all cases to be "properly" dressed and not to stand out from the rest of the group. This tendency is stronger in men than women who with their jewels and fine silks attempt to rival each other in a contest for social position. Burmese girl students who go abroad almost invariably wear their native costumes.

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Westernization is invading the women's sphere more slowly than the men's. However, the use of lipstick is now appearing among the upperclass of town people - along with modern brassieres and nylon KIMONOS with short sleeves. This is deplored by the more conservative as too revealing. The hair is shorter than formerly though the styles are only modified-western in type. A most important influence in the westernization of dress of the upper classes have been the American films.

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Normal and Preventative Measures.

Childbirth; MEE SWA (Fire-Birth). U Myaing gives a short

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description of the handling of childbirth:

"In the process of birth, the umbilical cord is severed with a flat bamboo. The midwife then washes the baby, wraps it up in cloth and puts it to sleep. After delivery saffron is mixed with water and given to the mother to drink. It is also smeared on the mother's body. After one week she is given hot baths once a day for three days in succession, 'to bring out the sweat'. There are no costs for delivery. Midwives do it free of charge. However, the family is obliged to give them presents of Kingis, clothes, etc., but never money. Furthermore, it is perfectly all right even if no presents are made."

Ma Aye Myaing gives a more complete description of the entire course of pregnancy and labour, followed by the initial treatment of the new-born infant:

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"During the first four months of pregnancy, the expectant mother experiences occasional spells of dizziness and palpitation, and after a while begins to vomit. Once a day early in the morning until the time for labour. Two days before the onset of labour, pain begins to be felt in the abdomen and in the back. A mixture of saffron and water was taken internally three times a day and hot brick was applied twice a day for one week. The cost of saffron for one month is Rs. 3/-. The patient is made to perspire by boiling herbs known as "Thanat-ywet" and "Sin-cho-ywet" in a pot and placing the pot in a covered place where the patient had to sit and perspire. The midwife visited her for seven days and applied massage to the abdomen. The umbilical cord was cut by the midwife. In cutting the cord, a silver coin was placed underneath and the cord was tied by a string. The naval cord dropped after three days. During the first week after labour, a mixture of "Yin-pya" and saffron also had to be taken to prevent haemorrhage. The infant was fed after three days, when the milk appeared. On the third day after labour, "saffron smoking" was given, and if the patient felt sleepy she had to smell "sa-mon-net". This day is known as "Two-thit-laung-de-ne" and is regarded as an important day. Great care is taken, as it is believed that any shock or excitement is fatal. The patient is not allowed to oversleep in the daytime. That is the reason why "sa-mon-net" is given."

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Ma Aye Myaing also reported an abortion on the third month of pregnancy at Kyaukgon on their way to Rangoon. This was due to the rigors of the evacuation. No treatment was taken.

Menstruation; YAR THI LAR. (Season-coming). Menstruation for

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Ma Aye Myaing started at the age of fifteen years, then disappeared for seven months, after which it appeared again and has occurred regularly since. For this, she takes a mixture of jagery and ginger. Jagery for one day costs one anna and ginger costs .33 annas.

The black langyi worn at this time absorbs the discharge and does not show the stain. The upper classes in towns now use western pads in public, but black langyis are still in use in private.

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The main active preventative measures are those of cleaning the body and the clothes. The Burmese seem to be fastidious in this regard. The boiling of water and food is a similar measure. However, there does not seem to be much concern with communal sanitary measures as practical in western countries. It is difficult to see a real difference in the standard of preventative measures in Camp as opposed to Pathwa. In effect, the individual standards are maintained and the communal ones remain as negative as previously.

The medical record as given by the family, though open to question as to accuracy in coming from laymen, does indicate a high incident of communicable diseases and apparent lack of deficiency disorders. The low incident of dysentery is surprising, but may not be accepted without question. The high incident of piles is interesting in suggesting a cultural disorder perhaps organically tied to the constant squat position. There appeared to be a greater incident of eyesores, chills, and skin diseases in the refugee camp - perhaps as a result of greater crowding in the the urban situation. Certainly the dust of Rangoon is an active hazard in this regard.

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Most of the family's medical care has been that of Burmese practitioners. Only 3 cases was western medicine used, and in two of these Burmese remedies were also used. Dr. Sheppard, ECA medical adviser, and Ko Mya Tu interviewed U Myaing for the purpose of finding out his reactions to western medicine. His increased contact with modern medicine in Rangoon has had an effect on his thought as seen in the interview below:

U Myaing said: "In our practical experience we find that western medicine is more efficacious (than native Burmese medicine). I remember the woman whom you (Ko Mya Tu) came and gave injections to. She recovered at once and is now hale and hearty - the woman who lives in the shed near our place (in the refugee camp). She was stricken with dysentery. She was suffering from 11 o'clock at night till morning, when an ambulance was summoned by telephone to take her to the hospital. She was given injections and by noon she was feeling very much better. Burmese doctors take much longer. Some of them mix in western medicines with their own. If we were given the choice we would prefer western medicine because it takes effect quicker. I have seen one case of Burmese medicine succeeding where western medicine failed. This was a case of urinary trouble."

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removed. Old folks habitually like bitter foods - especially tea leaves. Eating prepared foods left over night is strictly prohibited as a cause of illnesses. Curry must be eaten while it is hot.

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(There are no apparent reasons - just observation from eating spoiled foods). Boiled rice and fried dry fish comprises the standard sick diet in addition to other foods especially prescribed for the care or for giving vigour. It is interesting to note that English foods such as tinned biscuits ("Golden Puff biscuits") or milk preparations ("Holloicks") are preferred for the sick diet by those who can afford them. The "strong" tastes of these foods give strength to the sick person. Lately, western medicines have been recognized as powerful. U Myaing's experiences above show the means by which this idea is established. However, the Burmese doctor is relied on even by families of the administrative class in Rangoon.

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When a case of sickness seems beyond response to normal treatments, and it has been diagnosed as of a natural cause, the SAY SAY (medicine-master) is called in. "Foot-hire" at a stiff rate of Rs. 5/- for the first visit and 2 or 3 rupees for succeeding visits is paid for this service. "Say-saya, we place the case in your hands" is intoned, to which the doctor replies "If our faith coincides (i.e. patients and doctors) then we will be successful - otherwise we cannot go against Karma". The doctor notes the symptoms, feels forehead for fever, inquires of colour of urine and the course of the disorder. He then chants in verse the diagnosis as "eyes yellow, action irregular, forehead moist - (giving nature of sickness)". The treatment also follows in verse form as a rigid formula prescribing medicines and diet. The doctor is a specialist in one or more types of medicine which he has concocted such as "blood purifying medicine", "fever medicine", "purgative medicine", and he will have been called in because of this specialty. Charmed water is frequently given. Here verse formula is said over a cup of water to give it power.

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SAY SAY are trained when young men as apprentices to older doctors. The training includes memorizing many books giving diagnoses and formulas for curing as well as learning the master's arts.

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A village of 2000 persons may have 10 or more doctors. The more successful "move up" to the towns and cities. Most of the medicines are herbs and chemicals including roots, leaves, fruits, berries, salt, and sulphur. Many of the herbs are imported from India. Parts of animals such as crocodile skin, pig and horse droppings are used less frequently. The doctor must be a moral man of good character or the medicine will not be effective. He uses the right index finger "medical finger" to stir the concoctions. The family of the sick person may either prepare the medicine themselves from the doctor's directions or take it's on special preparations. Many cures are effected by regulating diet, and in most cases this plays an important part in the cure. The knowledge which the SAI-SAYA must command is extensive including not only the medical wisdom of the ages but also the peculiarities of the patient and above all the relationship of the seasons (weather conditions) to the case.

If one doctor fails to cure, another may be called in after dismissing the first. A keen feeling of rivalry exists between the various doctors and there are no cooperative consultations. Although each prides himself on a specialty the secrets of which he jealously guards he feels qualified also to handle any other medical problems. "If two are of the same thoughts, they are enemies" emphasizes the general attitude of competition seen in many other phases of Burmese life. The Burmese doctors are invariably applied to for help first. If this does not succeed modern medical facilities are sought. If modern medicine fails it is greatly derided. Maung Maung Than's aunt was ill for a long time and, after consulting many Burmese specialists she was taken to the Bangoon Mission Hospital where her case was diagnosed as advanced breast cancer beyond cure. His uncle, though not a medical man, is recognised as a last resort specialist who when the patient is beyond any other help administers lime juice (ordinarily fatal where fever is involved) in a "do or die" treatment. He is warned off when he appears at a sick house for the risk often does not pay off.

Illness is frequently caused by supernatural spirits acting either independently or as agents for "black magic" specialists.

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of the villagers. The head-nat, the guardian of the village, replies with accusations that "the whole village has forgotten me", boasts of his powers to punish and is finally mollified. In Rangoon there are professional nat-givers who parade the streets with a cart bearing the image of "the conqueror of the salty waters" (special nat of entrepreneurs). For a few annas he will make offerings to the nat and relieve the busy townspeople of this task.

The arrangement is a mutual one where the people enjoy freedom from oppressions in return for certain concessions. This phenomenon closely parallels the traditional relationship between the rulers and the ruled in Burma. In a real sense the nat concept serves the function of allowing the Burmese a sense of control over catastrophic forces which do not fall into any other system (as secular, political, personal relationships, cosmology.). It is this system of controls that the western scientific system most immediately competes with. The administrative and entrepreneur class of Burmese especially in Rangoon say they "Do not believe" in nats. But it is usual for most individuals, no matter what their western background to apply to nats in cases of ill fortune "just in case".

THAYEN (Ghosts) generally are a group of supernatural spirits closely related to nats in their origins but with a different set of properties. These are "recently" deceased individuals whose crimes and sins while on earth or manner of death condemn them to an eternity of wandering and mischief-making. Actually, each person becomes a ghost at death but is ordinarily released from earth at the moment of the interment of the corpse for judgement in heaven. Those who die of "raw death" become ghosts. These include: death in childbirth, by wild animals (especially tigers), instant deaths by dahn as in warfare, or by hanging. In Maung Maung Than's village a prominent ghost is U Me Gyi (Mr. Blacky) a very sinful fellow who lived 50 or 60 years ago in the village. His complexion is quite black and horribly distorted. He inhabits a banyan tree and specializes in causing infant illness. Offerings of rice at the tree pacifies him. Ghosts are forces for evil only - evil of the more irritating and less important kind. Older people wear red and white coloured strings about their necks as a protection against ghost evils. It is very common to wear a LIT-PAN

gives important data on the process of urbanizing villagers - the country people are an important group in the growth of the Burmese section of Rangoon; probably a large section of the present refugee population will stay in the future.

The concepts of pattern of living and standard of living: The Burmese pattern of living, or any culture pattern, is a universe of beliefs and practices manifested in acts and artifacts. The analogy of the "Universe" is a useful one in that it recognizes a guiding body of understandings that controls the whole of the society (like "laws" of Universe) while emphasizing the particular understandings that govern the various groups or classes of the society (like the "laws" of the Solar and other systems within the Universe). The "solar systems" are the standard levels of operations forming a comprehensive set of forces within itself. Families, like U Myaing's have a mobility, in the case under study a forced change, which takes them out of one standard system into another. The adjustments which they undergo reflects the "laws" which control the various standard levels as well as the basic concepts controlling the whole of the society.

Each belief and practice has a range of expressions which can be defined. The particular expression practiced by a family is the standard or level of a phenomenon capable of expansion or contraction within prescribed limits. The ultimate limits are defined by the total range of expressions for the culture as a whole. But the practical limits for a family are defined by the possibilities of the society segment (community) in which they find themselves. Thus, the range of U Myaing's possibilities of expression are much greater in Rangoon than they were in Pathwa and greatly exceed his original ideas of what was possible. He may, for example, become a highly westernized political leader - although this seems unlikely in terms of his expectations. The westernized, urban spheres of Burmese culture is now opened to the family.

U Myaing is motivated by the basic expectations of the Burmese culture at a level applicable to his situation in terms of the possibilities of his social environment. In Pathwa, he was a fisherman and aspired to those things that fishermen should. In camp, he was at

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his lot. It also tends toward a kind of stratification of society where the boundaries, however, are neither sharp nor fast. Each person is comfortably installed in his place and competes, mildly, only with those of his own level. The obligations (as contributions for ceremonies) are in terms of one's ability, and his status is in terms of his virtues. Status is closely correlated with increasing age. This concept motivates the Burmese in the village within "KANNA groups".

The unusual individual may transcend his family positions in exceptional cases - by marriage or achievement. Achievement by physical force has been a means of mobility in the past - there is the tradition of the strong man leader who comes from humble origins. Mobility by entrepreneur achievement (rice mill owners; traders) has been greatly stimulated with increased western contacts. U Myaing was a sort of entrepreneur in Pathwa. In Rangoon the opportunities are great and some Burmese are successfully embracing this, as yet, somewhat unfamiliar course. The western entrepreneur concept appears to be finding a fertile ground in the traditional "group individualism" of the Burmese.

The standards or levels of culture: When U Myaing's standard of living plummeted downwards as a refugee he became discontented and unhappy desiring to return to the "plethora" of his former level. At first he could only think of returning to Pathwa to achieve this, but as ~~the~~ ^{he} begins to crown his efforts in Rangoon he now feels the beginnings of a sense of achievement. In his refugee situation there was no sense of shame for his reduction - the events contributing to his downfall were beyond his control, and he had lived "as a refugee should" in which his abilities and obligations were balanced. This resulted in an attitude of cheerful patience understandable in terms of the KANNA concept.

The two standards, in Pathwa and camp, represent balanced levels ranging from the "average" Burmese village situation to close to the minimum. Higher standards than those of Pathwa are seen in the administrative class of Rangoon and other major towns where western influences are strong (car, western furniture and household utensils, westernised house and clothing, etc.). Lower standards may be

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175 it, carrying on trade with India and the rest of Indo-China. During this period Burmese dancing and music and poetry, as embodied in songs, perhaps assumed definite and national forms. But there was
 177 no writing. The kings that came from India probably knew writing,
 175 but their knowledge was perhaps limited; in any case, it never
 212 reached the people. The introduction of Buddhism into the country brought no writing, as it came through traders whose knowledge of religious learning was meagre. The few religious tracts preserved in monasteries were looked upon merely as curious and sacred objects. The religion, feeble from the beginning, decayed and soon disappeared. The kingdom came to an end in the first century A.D.¹

175 A new kingdom was founded in Upper Burma at Pagan, which
 779 controlled the land and river trade-routes, and as a result of its
 212 commercial advantages, it became a powerful kingdom with the ascension to the throne of Anawrahta in 1044. From that point Burmese history ceases to be conjectural. Through the influence of the learned and saintly monk, Shin Arahan, Buddhism in one of its purest forms was introduced into the kingdom by Anawrahta. With it, writing was also introduced. The alphabet was the 'Square Pali', and the literature the *Three Pitakas* embodying all the religious teachings in Pali. Curiously enough, the alphabet and the literature did not come directly from India, but from Burma itself—from the Talaing kingdom of Thaton. The Talaings were a branch of the Burmese race. Many think that they were a mixture of native tribes with Indian traders. I venture to disagree. The earliest inhabitants of Burma were Indonesians, who settled on the coast of Burma during successive 'drifts' of humanity from the west, through India, to further east. Later, there was an infiltration of Mongolian tribes, who came down the rivers from the North. Inland, where the Indonesian element was weak, the new-comers dominated and later became the Burmese; along the coast where the Indonesian element was strong the tribes united and became the Talaings. However, all this is mere conjecture. The early history of the Talaing kingdom of Thaton, which
 175 Anawrahta had to destroy to obtain possession of the alphabet and
 101 the *Three Pitakas*, is not known, except that it was perhaps in existence a few centuries before Christ and was under the influence

[14] ¹ Pe Maung Tin and G. H. Luce, *The Glass Palace Chronicle*; A. Phayre, *History of Burma*. G. E. Harvey in his *History of Burma* contends that the first Burmese kingdom was Prome, and that it flourished only in about the seventh century A.D.

INTRODUCTION

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of Hindu traders from South India. After the introduction of Buddhism into South India by Asoka in 261 B.C., the traders began to bring Buddhist elements to Thaton. With the establishment in the third or fourth century after Christ of the Hindu kingdoms in Java and Sumatra, Thaton became an important trading centre, and with the rise of a great Buddhist centre at Conjeveram in Madras in the fifth century, the Talaings began to receive religious writings in Pali. From that time onwards, learning was definitely established in the kingdom, and, as a result, a Talaing literature came into being. Anawrahta was interested in Pali only, and therefore when he destroyed the city, he burnt all the manuscripts except those in Pali.¹

The writing and learning that were thus introduced into Pagan took root at once. Prose and poetry as embodied in the language of the court and in songs had been in existence long before, though unwritten, and now the new learning turned them into written forms and began to develop them. Pali was studied everywhere, and in the newly-built temples with their crowded monastic life, works in Pali on religion, on Pali grammar and prosody, and on the legal code of Manu came to be produced.² Translations were also made, and soon Pagan became famous throughout India for its Pali scholarship. But

¹ The Burmese language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese group, whereas the Talaing belongs to the Mon-Khmar group. In spite of Anawrahta's conquest and in spite of the fact that racially they were cousins, the Talaings became completely merged with the Burmese only in the eighteenth century. The probability of the Sanskrit drama reaching the Talaings is considered in chap. ii.

² G. E. Harvey, op. cit., pp. 59, 70.

The most famous for literary activity was the *Kyauku Ohnmin* temple. Though built perhaps even before Anawrahta, when a corrupted form of Buddhism was prevalent, it is still in an excellent condition (Harvey, p. 17).

The code of Manu was compiled originally in Sanskrit, during the period 200 B.C.-A.D. 200. Since that time it has been one of the chief sources of Hindu law (J. D. Mayne, *Hindu Law*). The Burmese received it in a Talaing-Pali version in which the sacerdotal element had been done away with. That explains why, although Manu is one of the chief sources also of Burmese Buddhist law, it has little in common with Hindu law. The existence of the code as the chief source of Talaing law (Harvey, op. cit., p. 111) raises again the question, how far were the Talaing writings under the influence of Sanskrit and its literature? We shall never know. When Anawrahta destroyed Talaing institutions and historical and literary works, he intended that all knowledge of the past greatness of the Talaings should pass into oblivion so as to smooth his way towards unifying Burma into one single State.

Pali has been, since 1044, the classical language of Burma.

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INTRODUCTION

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was appointed viceroy of the Seven Hill Districts of Mindon, situated between Arakan and the river Irrawaddy. It was during the Age of Triumph, the period when the native interlude and the Siamese-influenced court drama were being fused. At the miniature court of the viceroy were presented interludes and court plays, and *Hansas* were publicly recited. In his palace,¹ a special apartment was built for the regular performance of plays and interludes, a special troupe of actors was taken under his patronage, and more famous troupes were often invited from the capital. In 1824 the unfortunate viceroy failed to stem the advance of the British forces, and he was executed and his palace burnt by royal order. From 1825 to 1852, the date of the second Anglo-Burmese war, Mindon was administered directly from the capital, and times were difficult; therefore dramatic performances at Mindon were few and far between. Though the son of the late viceroy was living, he wisely chose to leave the court, the administration of justice and politics alone, and as a result, he had neither the influence nor the wealth to patronize the drama. Therefore, as far as the drama was concerned, a gap resulted in the tradition of the family. In 1852 the British annexed the whole of Lower Burma, and Mindon passed into British hands. The viceroy's grandson was appointed chief administrative officer. This officer, my great-grandfather, took his office to be exactly similar in rank to that of his grand-sire, and though the British Government did not know of it—or the authorities at Rangoon did not care—he restored in effect the court of his grandfather, and dramatic performances were revived.² To him I am indebted for preserving much of the custom and tradition of the executed ancestor. To his revival of official performances of plays and interludes, I owe my information gathered from members of my family and the townspeople of Mindon. While the court poet, U Pon Nya, was further developing the drama, continuing the work of U Kyin U at the Burmese capital of Mandalay, in the out-of-the-way town of Mindon the interludes were still being performed. But it must not be supposed that Mindon was the only place where the interlude lived on. It survived in many places alongside the plays of the two great dramatists. But only from Mindon have I been able to obtain first-hand information and

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¹ Though it was termed the 'palace', it was by no means a stately mansion or an imposing castle. Except for its gilded spires, emblems of the king's authority, it was just a big house of timber and bamboo with thatched roofs.

² He was U Sauk, Extra Assistant Commissioner.

647 accounts regarding it. Apart from the notes gathered by my father, I
 175 base my information on the accounts given to me orally by my grand-
 536* mother and grand-aunts who actually saw the interludes performed.

127 In support of the oral tradition regarding the nature of the
 175 interlude, there are some echoes of it in the plays of U Kyin U. He
 536* developed the interlude into a proper play, but the change was not
 a sudden one, and in his plays we find echoes of the interlude in its
 various stages. His plays are considered in detail in another chapter.
 There are also contemporary references to the interlude. Even from
 an English pen we have an account. Colonel Yule in 1855 saw an
 entertainment midway between the interlude and the developed plays
 of U Kyin U.¹

644 The period of the court plays offers an easier task for research.
 536* The *Rama* play from Siam is preserved, with adaptations, it is true,
 [177] but with notes on the original when a change was made in the pre-
 538 served version.² The other Siamese play of *Eenaung* has come down
 to us. The poem *Rama-yagan* which Burmanized the *Rama* story
 has also come down. Accounts of the performances of the court plays
 and the recitation of the poem at court are many and well known.
 From the time when they were first composed down to the present
 day, the works of these court poets and dramatists have been studied
 and read. The influence of these works on the interlude is suggested,
 not only by the 'internal evidence' in U Kyin U's plays, but also
 by the editorial prefaces to the works in their various editions.

[114] Though only three plays of U Kyin U exist at the present day as
 far as is known, the period is quite easy of research, because references
 and notes regarding him occur in various records of the court and the
 nobility, and because the Burma Research Society has published new
 editions of two of his plays; and though the prefaces to them are short
 and no attempt is made to make a complete study, suggestions for
 further study and research are made by the editors.

175 The period of U Pon Nya offers the easiest task, as compared with
 536* other periods, so far as research is concerned. All his plays are

¹ H. Yule, *A Narrative of the Mission sent by the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in 1855*. His description of the dramatic entertainment he saw is considered again in the next chapter in connexion with Sir William Ridgeway's theory of the development of the Burmese drama.

² There is a copy of the *Rama* play in the British Museum. It is wrongly catalogued as by U Ku, who was only the editor. All these plays and the poem have been printed again and again, and are easily obtainable in Burma.

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF BURMESE DRAMA

1. BURMESE MUSIC AND DANCING

I HAVE said that no Burmese drama is to be found before the eighteenth century. The origins of that drama are to be found in the remote past of Burma's own national development, rather than in foreign importations or influence.

No doubt, Burmese music and dancing arose out of primitive religious rituals as in other countries. Society developed, civilization expanded, and contact with the Hindus and Chinese gave new ideas, but the native element always dominated, and the music and dancing remained, as indeed they still remain, essentially Burmese. In A.D. 800 when the Hindu expansion overseas was an accomplished fact, when the Hindu and Chinese civilizations had come into contact with each other, and when the rest of Indo-China had been drawn into the influence of those civilizations, Burmese music and dancing remained independent. In 800-2, when some parts of Upper Burma were under the nominal suzerainty of Nanchao (then a semi-independent State, now Yunnan), two Burmese deputations accompanied Nanchao missions to the Court of the Chinese Emperor, and the Burmese 'sang songs containing Sanskrit words and went through spelling dances, lining up in a pattern which read "Nanchao sends holy music!"¹ The Imperial Secretary has left us a poem describing the occasion. The following is an extract:

Music from the land of P'iao, music from the land of P'iao,²
Brought hither from the great ocean's south-west corner
Yung Ch'iang's son, Shunant'o.
Has come with an offering of southern tunes to fête the New Year.
Our Emperor has taken his seat in the courtyard of the palace.
He does not press his cap strings to his ears, he is listening to you!

¹ G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*, p. 14.

² The land of P'iao was the name by which Burma was known to the Chinese until the tenth century (*ibid.*, p. 11).

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THE ORIGINS OF BURMESE DRAMA

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have been celebrated year after year, at least since the reintroduction of Buddhism in 1056, and at least since March, 638, when an early king of Pagan, Popa Sawrahan (613-40), drew up the present Burmese era, the dawn of every Burmese new year has been the occasion for mirthful water-throwing.¹

Buddhism had been introduced into the country through commercial relations with India long before the foundation of the kingdom of Pagan, but from the beginning it was only at second-hand and therefore feeble. The real religion of the Burmese before the reintroduction of Buddhism in 1056 was animistic, and they worshipped various spirits, known as *nats*. There were mediums, mostly women, who danced to please the spirits, and as the spirits were supposed to enter into the bodies of the mediums, sometimes it was believed that the spirits, and not the mediums, were actually dancing. Sometimes the medium herself actually believed that a spirit had taken control of her body, but usually she only pretended that a spirit had entered her, and gave an exhibition of acting. As the medium of each particular *nat* dressed herself in appropriate clothes, the spirit dances were essentially dramatic.² When Buddhism, in one of its purest forms, was introduced under Anawrahta, the great king realized the impossibility of attracting people suddenly to the new faith; so he compromised by recognizing the *nats* as Buddhist spirits and giving them shrines in his Shwezigôn Pagoda as its guardian spirits. When asked the reason, Anawrahta replied: 'Men will not come suddenly to the new faith. Let them come for their old gods, and they will gradually be won over.'³

So the worship of the *nats* lived on, and with the advance of

¹ Shway-Yoe (Sir George Scott) in *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, and Fielding Hall in *The Soul of a People* give detailed accounts of the feasts and life in the villages. However, as far as I have been able to find out, the Tazaungmôn celebrations have never been described in any English work.

² These dances are still performed on spirit-feast days at Taungbyôn (near Mandalay), a small town given up to spirit worship since the days of Pagan's greatness and perhaps even before.

The belief in, as distinct from the worship of, spirits is not alien to Buddhism.

The chief works on the subject are: Sir R. C. Temple, *The Thirty-Seven Nats*; Grant Brown, 'The Taungbyon Festival' in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1915; the same author's 'The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese' in *Folk-Lore*, 1921; and G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*.

³ G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 33.

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tunes played by the orchestra. The chorus was first introduced for two reasons: the audience liked a dance, and the actors did not forget that their original calling was that of mediums.

2. According to Ridgeway, the second stage of the drama was reached when the 'true dramatic element borrowed from the Indian historical plays of Rama, presented by the puppet players' had entered Burmese drama. The weak points in this theory will be apparent when the further history of the drama is considered in later chapters. The 'true dramatic element' was already in the *Nibhatkhin*, or at least in the interlude; the Indian *Ramayana* coming by way of Siam did influence Burmese drama, but this was possible only because there was already a native drama to absorb this foreign influence. Nor were the *Rama* plays presented at first by puppet players. When the translations and adaptations of the Siamese *Ramayana* were being first presented at court, puppet plays were unknown. Ridgeway puts forward some opinions regarding the Burmese puppet show also, but they will be considered in Chapter VII.

3. According to Ridgeway, the third stage of Burmese drama was reached when there appeared plays 'based on the Indian models, but finding their themes in the national history and mythology, intermixed with Buddhistic elements, and performed by puppets and living actors.' It is true that after the introduction of the Siamese *Rama* play to the Burmese court, plays of the type described appeared, but the plays were by no means modelled on the *Rama* play. The Siamese play gave rise to a native court drama which influenced the interlude and prepared the way for the first great Burmese dramatist, U Kyin U. And the 'Buddhistic elements' which entered the drama have a history of their own. All these points are considered in later chapters.

On the nature and achievements of Burmese drama, Ridgeway says: 'The Burmese drama has not remained crystallized as a piece of religious ritual. On the contrary, it has made distinct steps towards the true drama which Thëpis in Greece and the forerunners of Marlowe and Shakespeare in England detached from the sacred shrines and lifted into a distinct artistic form. Yet it has not advanced beyond the lyrical stage, consisting of dancing, singing and instruments of music, the undulation of the vocal expression being much more subtle and intense than the expression of features, whilst gesture is restricted to the conventional gestures of the dance. The usual scene is the palace, its inmates the characters, and the drama

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CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF A COURT DRAMA IN BURMA

1. THE *RAMAYANA* OF VALMIKI

BEFORE considering the influence of the Siamese *Rama* play on Burmese drama, perhaps it will not be out of place to attempt to give an account of the great Indian epic, the *Ramayana*, in which the Siamese play had its sources.

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The *Ramayana* is one of the two Hindu epics, the other being the *Mahabharata*. The *Ramayana* as a completed poem is the older of the two, though the kernel of the *Mahabharata* may have been older. Very probably the legend of Rama existed long before Valmiki composed the poem, to which later poets made large additions; the original composition and the main additions belong to the period 400 B.C. The epic contains two separate stories, the court intrigues of Ayodhya and the exile of Rama to the forest; the capture of Sita by Ravana and the resulting war with the demon king. The first story was probably in existence as a Buddhist Birth Story—the *Dasaratha Jataka*—when the poem came into being.¹

The poem is divided into seven books. The first book in its present shape, which reveals additions to the original, tells of the manner in which the poem came to be composed by Valmiki, of the Hindu gods, the divine origin of the prince Rama, and his winning of Sita as bride by bending a strong bow which none other could bend. In the second book we read that Rama was going to be consecrated heir, but the junior queen, Kaikeyi, the mother of Bharata, reminded the king that he had promised two boons to her for nursing him when he was lying ill. She demanded firstly the choice of her own son, Bharata, as heir, and secondly the exile of Rama. The doting king was in great distress and tried to argue with the queen, but it was in vain, and the promise had to be kept. Rama acquiesced, and

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¹ Dr A. B. Keith has kindly pointed out to me that many scholars doubt whether the *Dasaratha Jataka* could be so old, and, therefore, the general opinion would seem to regard it as being later than the poem.

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On this great national epic were founded many plays. For example, the thirteen Trivandrum plays commonly attributed to the authorship of Bhasa contain two based on the *Ramayana*. The date of the plays is generally accepted as the second or third century after Christ.

2. THE SIAMESE COURT PLAY OF RAMA

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From about the third century after Christ, the great Hindu expansion overseas began in earnest, and as a result many Hindu kingdoms were founded in Indo-China, Malaya, Java, and the surrounding regions. Before that time, very probably there was at least some intercourse between India and those regions, and may be Buddhism was not unknown in the regions mentioned. But by the third century A.D. Buddhism had completely disappeared in them, except for very faint traces remaining in Burma. In India itself, Buddhism was on the wane and Brahmanism was in the ascendant. Therefore when the merchants of Northern India spread a new culture in Indo-China and the surrounding regions, the culture was distinctly Hindu. The Indians took with them their religious epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Though both came to be very well known, the former was perhaps the more popular, probably because it was more finished artistically. Sanskrit plays were also no doubt introduced. The Hindu influence reached its height about the fourth and fifth centuries—in the third century Bhasa was composing his plays, and Kalidasa, the greatest of Hindu-Sanskrit dramatists lived about the year 400. Hindu poems and romances must also have been brought into the newly-founded kingdoms and trading centres.

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The intensity of the new influence varied in the regions. Burma was nearest and directly on the route from India. But probably there was already a strong native civilization, and Hindu culture failed to take root. Along the coast, however, at Thaton, there was quite a strong outpost of Hindu culture, but even there the Hindu influence was quite negligible compared with regions farther east. In Cambodia the new culture was especially favoured, and in Java, Sumatra and the Malay peninsula, it took deep root. In Siam, however, the intensity was much less. In the narrow circle of the court the Hindu influence was strong, but the people were quite untouched by it. The chief reason was very probably the continuous, peaceful invasion by people from the north, the Shans, or at least the forefathers of the modern Shans. According to some scholars, they were Buddhists, which is not unlikely as Buddhism, in a modified form,

[i.e., the *Ramayana*--ANALYST.]

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was prevailing in China and Tibet by about the third century A.D. In any case, the ever-increasing population, alien to Hindu culture, must have acted against the intensity of the Hindu influence. Moreover, Siam was one of the earliest converts from Hinduism to Buddhism which, especially after the great Buddhist missionary, Buddhagosa, who lived in the fifth century, was ousting Brahmanism in Indo-China. At the Siamese court, however, the Hindu tradition was very strong, and remained so even when the king and his courtiers had become Buddhists.

In Siam, as in the neighbouring regions, learning did not reach the people for a long time even though it flourished at the court. The Hindu tradition was not strong enough to prevent the courtiers from creating a native literature. Buddhism prevented the courtiers from looking upon the Hindu learning with a conservatism that would not have allowed imitations. In Cambodia and elsewhere native ideas could never shake off the dominance of Hindu culture, and no native literature could come into being until quite modern times. Moreover, the very fact that the Hindu tradition was strong prevented the survival of Sanskrit literature in those regions, for once the tradition was broken, only chaos resulted. To make it clear, I will take the Java shadow-play. Sanskrit dramatic representation gave rise to the Java shadow-play. Therefore, one would expect Java to preserve a Hindu dramatic literature to herself and to the world. But it failed to do so. The shadow-play of Java is interesting as a special kind of dramatic performance, and not as dramatic literature. The stories that are presented on the shadow-stage in Java are taken mostly from the Hindu epics, but they have very little dramatic structure. Yet originally they must have been developed Sanskrit plays. Of course, to begin with, the Sanskrit shadow-plays themselves were slight in structure, but by no means so crude as the Javanese ones. The Hindu tradition was so strong that once it was destroyed, not only did the Hindu drama in Java decay and disappear, but a native drama in a developed form failed to appear. Stories from Hindu sources as well as stories from native history and mythology are still shown on the Java shadow-stage, but the plays are all formless and crude. In Cambodia, where the Hindu tradition was indeed very strong and lasted much longer, some remnants of the developed Sanskrit drama are preserved, but the tradition was so strong that no native element could enter it. There, up to the present day, a State theatre, with a special minister

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of State, presents the *Ramayana*, and less frequently that play which the Burmese calls the *Eenaung*.¹ Both are remnants of Sanskrit plays no doubt introduced by the early Hindu kings. Throughout the centuries, the two plays have been regularly presented with the full patronage of the king and all the splendour at his command. It is almost a ritual. During the intervening centuries, no fresh incentive had come from India, and no new element, no native element, was allowed to enter it; the result was that the Cambodian *Ramayana* soon lost its freshness. Cambodia, therefore, not only has no native drama; it also failed to preserve for posterity good examples of Sanskrit dramatic literature.

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To return to Siam. Even the courtiers did not look upon the Hindu tradition with too much awe and conservatism. They recognized and retained the vital elements of Hindu culture as far as possible so as not to clash with native and Buddhistic elements. The results of such special circumstances are best seen in Siamese literature. The court encouraged and the courtiers produced romances based on and in imitation of Sanskrit-Hindu romances. Native ideas, native tales, and native mythology were introduced into works modelled on Hindu literary works. In drama, the Siamese did not produce native plays, and they retained the *Ramayana* as a play. But they introduced new ideas and kept alive the old. In dramatic literature, as in all other matters, the Siamese had to reject all that was contrary to Buddhism, and some were retained only after much alteration to suit new needs. A consideration of the Siamese play of *Rama* shows clearly the above facts.

The epic tradition was very strong in India and it prevented Sanskrit drama from rising to still greater heights. In the new Hindu regions of Indo-China and the Malay Archipelago epic tradition was equally strong, if not stronger. In India the Sanskrit drama was shackled by the epic tradition; in the new regions the drama was very probably entirely subordinated to the epic. The dramatic performances in Cambodia, in Siam, in Java, before modern influences came in, were based mostly on the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*. Perhaps it is legitimate to assume that the Sanskrit plays introduced into the new Hindu kingdoms were mostly those based on the epics: mostly, but not all. For the *Eenaung*, which is very probably from Hindu-Sanskrit sources, tells a story unconnected with the two epics.

¹ This is explained in the next section.

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courtier later won fresh fame as a statesman and judge, becoming known to history as the Minister Myawaddi.¹

As has been stated, there was at the Siamese court a companion play to *Rama*. It was known as *Aindarwuntha*. There was also a Siamese court romance of the same name and dealing with the same theme. *Aindarwuntha* was a prince-soldier, and he had two sets of adventures, one amorous and the other martial. Myawaddi was one of those who broke away from the tradition that the Siamese models at the Burmese court must be preserved without any substantial change. He did not want to have his hands tied through this tradition, and so he did not translate the play, *Aindarwuntha*, but translated instead the court romance. Then he dramatized the romance, and called his new play, not *Aindarwuntha* but *Eenaung*.² In *Eenaung*, Myawaddi rejects the heroic adventures and tells only of the hero-prince's romantic intrigues.

The play is far too long. The *Rama* play was long, too, and it took two or three days to present it entire. The court had all the leisure in the world. *Rama*, if translated, would require about 400 of these pages. *Eenaung* is longer; it would be about 600 pages. The play was written more to be read than acted, and as far as is known, it was never presented entire. Only some scenes were acted. The play on the whole is disjointed; it is merely a collection of scenes, connected only through the personality of the prince. As the adventures are purely amorous, there is no action at all. We are told occasionally that the prince has gone on a journey or that he has achieved a conquest, but the scene is always the palace. Following the Siamese style, music and song are important elements in the play, but dances and fine dresses are absent. It is not a masque.

The merit of the play lies in its language, dialogue, and characterization. It is the language of the court, refined and elegant as that of *Rama*. But a certain element of simplicity is in it, and it is not too rich in words or in imagery, so that the common people could understand and appreciate it; in short, the usual clear style of the author, which is the hall-mark of his other writings, is also found in this play. In dialogue, the play retains the freshness and liveliness of the *Rama* play. In characterization, the play is a great advance on *Rama*

¹ An account of his career is given in G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 296.

² The play *Aindarwuntha* or *Eenaung* has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, on pp. 36 and 44-5.

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536* 828 through good fortune he is given a princely sum of money, his regard for the silver halfpenny acquired through industry and thrift, and his love for the woman remain. In the hour of his acquisition of half the kingdom, he does not forget either his lover or his halfpenny. However, he soon loses his cheerfulness through having to fill his office with dignity and ability; the crown prince is no longer the laughing water-seller, indulging in mock-heroics, laughing unashamed at his own poverty. Wealth and power do not always make one happy and cheerful. To the previously contented water-seller ambition comes to disturb his peace of mind. He is next only to the king, but he wants to be king now—he, who was contented before with a halfpenny hidden safely away. His greed and ambition tempt him, to kill his friend and king, who is responsible for making him the crown prince. Fortunately, his old sense of honesty and gratitude still remain. The good and evil in him fight, and U Pon Nya gives us a fine picture of the struggle in the mind of the water-seller. In the end, the good wins. If the character of a person is essentially good, in the end, in spite of all temptations, the good in him will carry him through, just as the water-seller's character finally triumphs over ambition and greed that result from wealth and power. The king offers him the whole kingdom, he has but to say 'yes', and from being the lowest in the country, he will become the highest. But he refuses the offer. He has tasted both poverty and wealth and in the end he chooses poverty—the poverty and peace of a hermit's life. He has the courage to act according to his convictions, and we can but respect and admire his final action.¹

4. WIZAYA

536* 719 [177] The story of this play is taken with slight modifications from a semi-religious work on the history of Buddhism in Ceylon, which is classed in the same category as a *Jataka*. In the original not only the history of Ceylon, but also some account of the history of the kingdom in India from which the island was colonized, was given. U Pon Nya, however, begins only at the point where the colonists leave their mother country, and ends his play at the point where a dynasty is assured to Ceylon.

536* The king is holding his court when he hears cries for help. On inquiry he learns that his elder son, Wizaya, has long been in the

¹ A translation of the play is given in appendix vi.

536* appear at all, and the song had lost its importance to such an extent
535 that only one scene in all his plays had songs, which was in *Dayas-gonban*, where the hermit and the two princesses spoke to each other in songs. Though U Pon Nya was a great writer of songs, not one appeared in his plays. These great dramatists, through their brilliance, made the audience interested in the play alone, and the professional actors had no choice but to follow the dictates of the famous playwrights. After U Pon Nya, through lack of interest in true drama and because there were no able dramatists, the drama fell again into the hands of the professional actors, who had always considered themselves dancers and singers. They continued to present the great plays and their imitations, but only as frameworks for their songs and dances. We shall see later that after the final flicker of the drama during the years 1877-86 it perished in the hands of the actors with their interest in song and dance.

536* The people themselves wanted song and dance. They wanted an
541 entertainment pleasing to the eye and the ear, without taxing the brain.
178 They wanted an escape from the realities of life, because they were weary of the present and anxious for the future, as they knew not what dreadful events the next few months would bring. They wanted new dances and new tunes, and they applauded elaborate dresses and brilliantly staged scenes; and the actors could give them what they wanted as, through the influence of English and French touring companies, the stage scenery and devices had developed by leaps and bounds.¹ They demanded both laughter and tears, but as they desired the drama to appeal only to their senses and not to the intellect, what they really wished for and received were farce and sentimental pathos. The spirit of the audience had changed since the days of the great dramatists. The drama came into being in the age of triumph, when the attitude of the audience towards life was one of serenity and optimism. During U Kyin U's time, disaster, in the shape of the loss of provinces to the British, had overtaken the country, but there seemed to be a promise of better times, and therefore the spirit of the nation was still serene. When U Pon Nya wrote his plays, more provinces had been lost to the British, but again there was a promise of better times, and the spirit of the audience remained calm and serene. But after U Pon Nya, the spirit was one of despair and anxiety.

¹ The development of the stage is considered in detail in chap. vii.

668 for scholars to rehandle it. The introduction of cheap printing in
178 Lower Burma was of the utmost importance to the drama. Printing
536* had been known to the Burmese long before the British administered
[213] Lower Burma, but it was an expensive and laborious affair. The
[17] British introduced cheap and efficient printing presses, worked by
cheap but skilled Indian labour. Once the stage of transition had
been completed and economic prosperity had returned, printing spread
all over Lower Burma and widened the circle of admirers of the
drama, encouraged the study of the great plays in their original form
as distinct from the modified versions of the professional actors, and
created a public eager not only to see but also to read plays. As a
result of these various causes scholars began writing plays again after
1875, but their efforts were not very successful until Saya Yaw. in
1877 wrote and produced his *History of Thaton*.

2. THE HISTORY OF THATON

536* Saya Yaw's story is remarkably original. In order that the
question of succession should be settled beforehand, the young
king of Thaton is advised by his ministers to take a consort
without delay, and he promises to consider the matter. In the next
scene, a brother and sister, belonging to a semi-civilized tribe on a
neighbouring mountain, are entering the city to seek employment,
for they have been starving since the death of their parents. The
scene shifts to the centre of the city, where a rich nobleman and his
wife are quarrelling and blaming each other, because they have no
children to inherit their wealth. The characters are comic, and the
scene is humorous. As they stand shouting at each other, the brother
and sister pass by, and they are struck by the girl's beauty and the
young man's nobility of bearing. When they discover that the stran-
gers are without parents and are looking for employment, they, in great
[563] joy, adopt them as son and daughter. In the next scene, merchants
from the Shan hills arrive at the city, singing and dancing their
own songs and dances. They soon dispose of their wares, and
they are making preparations to leave when the brother arrives.
He becomes friendly with the merchants, and after listening to their
tales of romance and adventure in their hills, he decides to accompany
them to their home. He asks permission to go from his foster-parents
and his sister, who reluctantly let him go. The foster-parents cry, and
the brother and sister bid farewell to each other in songs of great
tenderness. In the next scene, the chieftain of a Shan state is sorely

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dawn broke and the audience dispersed to work, at the most only the first half of the play had been shown.

The continued contact with the outside world further elaborated the stage scenery. The great development was in the lighting. Even during the decadent period, the stage was lit only by feeble oil lamps, but now powerful battery and arc lamps were used. Coloured lights played on the dancing actors and actresses, to the great delight of the audience. The developments in stage technique which would have been beneficial had the drama been alive, were wasted in the hands of the actors.

The people themselves neglected the 'old' plays. U Kyin U and U Pon Nya seemed to belong to the dim past and even the decadent plays which flourished but five years previously seemed to be far away, for much had happened in the intervening years. Scholars continued to read and study the plays of the two great masters, but they were read more for their prose and poetry than for their dramatic merit. The reason why the 'old' drama was so completely forgotten is not far to seek. It was because of the popularity of the novel. When the Siamese drama was introduced into Burma, the Siamese court romances were introduced along with it, and for a time, at court, they rivalled the plays. The Burmese court dramatists wrote many imitations of the romances, and thus the Burmese novel was born. But, as the drama increased in popularity, the novel was soon forgotten. Again, when the court drama had lost its freshness, the Birth Stories of U Awbatha, which were in many ways novels, became popular, but the coming of U Kyin U regained for the drama its popularity, and checked any further development of the novel. The later history of the novel I do not profess to have studied—the subject is outside the scope of this thesis, and no one has as yet written on it—but I think that after the annexation of Upper Burma, by which time many Lower Burmans had been educated in English schools, English and English translations of European novels began to influence the Burmese novel. In about 1889 or 1890, there appeared the famous *Maung Yin Maung and Ma Mai Ma*, a brilliant adaptation into Burmese, by an unknown author, of an English translation of *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Dumas. And from that time onwards until 1919 when the English short story began to be imitated in Burmese, the novel was extremely popular and satisfied the people's interest in character and incident that had developed the drama. As has been stated, the non-existence of the throne prevented the rise of a new drama, but it was the

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536* 101 Blending together of the 'people's drama' and the court drama in the hands of U Kyin U, the continuation and fuller achievement of his aims and ideals in U Pon Nya, and the decadence have their counterparts in the history of the Elizabethan drama. Yet whereas the Elizabethan drama as represented by Shakespeare has influenced the remnants of the Sanskrit drama to give birth to a new and vigorous national drama in India, it has failed to confer such a benefit on Burma.

Although Kalidasa flourished long before decadence set in, by the tenth century A.D. in the Sanskrit drama, remnants of it lived on, and still live on, in India. The best plays of Kalidasa and other classical dramatists were often performed right through the centuries to the present day, though with 'popular' modifications. In Bengal, the *Rama Lila*, an open-air performance of the *Rama* legend, was the chief dramatic entertainment until recent times. Once the study of English institutions and literature had taken root and spread all over India, Shakespeare was not only translated and read, but also put on the stage, with modifications to meet native and 'popular' tastes.¹ Once Shakespeare had been successfully introduced, other dramatists followed as a matter of course, and the English drama began to influence the Indian stage.² And in Bengal, helped perhaps by the awakening of a national consciousness somewhat comparable to that which gave Ireland the Abbey Theatre, a new and intensely living drama came to be well established by the end of the nineteenth century.³

536* 177 In Burma the 'old' drama was not preserved on the native stage by professional actors. When the first Burmese translations of Shakespeare—of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*—appeared in a Burmese magazine in 1912, the actors had so far removed themselves from the drama and the scholars, that presentation of the translations on the stage was never thought of, and was perhaps impossible. The great disservice the actors did to Burmese dramatic development was the dismissal from their theatre of the drama that had given them their occupation, for had they retained but some remnants of the great plays of U Kyin U and U Pon Nya, or even the decadent ones, English drama could have influenced those remnants and created a new drama. Without a theatre, the translated Shakespearian drama

¹ C. J. Sisson, *Shakespeare in India*.

² R. K. Yajnik, *The Indian Theatre*.

³ Guhathakurta: *Bengalee Drama*.

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could not and did not achieve success, even though the translator was the learned scholar and journalist, U Shwe Kyu.¹ The translations went unnoticed, and as the magazine became defunct in 1913, the precious issues which contain them are now available only in some libraries. After this failure to introduce Shakespeare into the vernacular, no further attempt was made, and Burmese is one of the very few civilized languages into which the plays of the great dramatist have not been successfully translated.

In 1919, after the Great War, a wave of national aspiration swept over Asia, and Burma was affected by it. With the resulting revival of interest in Burmese institutions, the study of U Kyin U and U Pon Nya has become again popular, not only in schools and colleges, but all over the country. In schools following the established educational practice of prescribing Shakespeare's plays as textbooks, the plays of U Kyin U and U Pon Nya are now so prescribed. The newly established Rangoon University, founded by the Government in 1920, the Burma Research Society² and the Burma Book Club— institutions founded by the British Government and University officials interested in Burmese history and literature, encouraged and led to the study of Burmese literature, including the drama, side by side with the English. And when adaptations in Burmese of a play by Molière and another by Tchekov appeared in 1928 in the magazine of the Book Club,³ there were hopes that a new drama was in course of being developed. But the study has been from the beginning independent of, and unconnected with, the theatre of the professional actors, who are in great demand and still popular with the majority of the people. Therefore the interest in the drama, even though spread beyond the university walls, remains academic rather than practical. And as far as I can see, there are no signs of the coming in the near future of a new national drama.

¹ The magazine in which the translation appeared was the *Shwe Kyu Magazine*, and U Shwe Kyu was its founder and editor.

² The Text Publication Committee of the Research Society has published U Kyin U's *Daywagonban* and *Parpahtin* with editorial notes, contributing much to our knowledge of the dramatist.

³ The adaptations were from English translations of the two plays. English is the only medium of contact with the western drama for the Burmese, and, as in India, the influence of other European literatures can come only through English channels.

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BURMESE DRAMATIC PRACTICE

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of course there were limits to the latitude allowed to him. The neglect of these conventions was supposed to result in disaster to the troupe and the death through diarrhoea of the actor who took the part or cracked the joke, and it would certainly result in the whole troupe being beaten by the audience and then put in prison by the officials. On the whole, the charge of irreligiousness attributed to the actors was not justified, and throughout the years, they had never been known even to attempt to evade the conventions. There were also conventions connected with social decorum. Kissing was not allowed on the stage. Although no penalty, supposed or real, was attached to it, this convention has never been broken. The actors could wear reproductions of all the regalia of a king, except the golden shoes, which only the king himself and princes in the line of succession could wear. The breaking of this rule was supposed to result in the death by diarrhoea of the actor who wore the shoes, but it was not punishable as a crime if they were actually worn on the stage, and it is known to have been broken sometimes. All the conventions, including those connected with spirit-dancing, still exist at the present day.

During the decadent period the platform stage, the elaborate scenery and curtains were introduced from French and English sources, for French touring companies often performed before the court towards the close of Mindon's reign (1853-78), and from about 1870 English touring companies of actors often visited Rangoon. With the performances of these companies of European actors, the general public had no contact. At the court the king and a few courtiers, out of respect for the French embassy, witnessed presentations of French operettas, but as they did not understand French and the actors could speak no Burmese, the court found the performances boring at times. At Rangoon the English actors presented musical comedies, or more truly, musical shows, to an audience composed entirely of English residents. It must be stated that the touring actors did in no way introduce specimens of the French or English dramas, for what they presented were third-rate musical shows. But they did introduce some examples of western stage-craft, and the Burmese professional actors, ever on the alert for borrowings, copied wholesale the platform stage, the curtain, and the elaborate stage scenery, with the result that, during the decadent period, the Burmese stage came to be a copy of the European stage. At Rangoon a permanent theatre was even built, a thing unknown to

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536* Burmese drama before, and most of U Ku's plays and *The History of Thaton* and *Saw-phay and Saw-may* were produced at that theatre. Admission to a performance was by payment, a practice alien to dramatic performances before the decadent period. The rise of 'matinee idols' resulted in the chief actor, instead of the leader of the orchestra, becoming the head of a troupe of actors. Formerly, a dramatic performance took place during the afternoon or early evening, but now because of the repeated applause for the popular 'idols', a performance lasted throughout the night.

554 I have stated how the prejudice against professional actors increased rather than diminished through the coming of popular actors or actresses and the resulting rivalry between different troupes. But 536* 178 the prejudice was gradually overcome through the efforts of one man, Po Sein, who used to perform with two ex-soldiers standing beside him with rifles. By about 1912, his reputation as a leading actor was firmly established, and from that time onwards he concerned himself with raising the prestige of his profession by destroying the bitterness and the ugliness that had crept into it. By his charm of manner and personality, he soon established himself as the undisputed leader of the profession. His generous gifts to charity and irreproachable conduct soon acquitted the profession from the charge of immorality and irreligiosity. During the Great War he contributed much to the Red Cross Fund. For his services to charity and his profession, he was given a title by the Government in 1919. Such an honour had never been given before to an actor (had such a thing happened under the Burmese kings or even before 1914, the officials would certainly have vehemently protested, taking it as an insult to their class), and the Government's action was the final denial of the old dictum that actors and beggars were outside the pale of good society.

2. THE PUPPET SHOW

536* According to common tradition, the Burmese puppet show came into being long before the drama, but as our knowledge of the history 175 of the puppet show before the reign of Bodawpaya (1782-1819) is meagre, perhaps it will be better to consider first the puppet's history from that reign.

[645] It will be remembered that, as stated in Chapter II, Bodawpaya, under whom the court and the 'people's' dramas united together to give rise to a national drama, created a new ministry, that of the stage. The new minister, being a conservative courtier, wanted the drama

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101 screen. The transparent sticks (tied to the side of the figures) that guide the actors do not show on the screen.¹ The shadow shows of other countries are essentially the same as in Java, except that (1) 'the fantastic vine' is not found anywhere else, (2) the audience, men and women, see only the shadows, and (3) the faces are not distorted as in Java; but this is because with the Mohammedan conquest, the Javanese had to get over the religious difficulty. The Mohammedan religion does not allow the reproduction of the human form in any way, and therefore the Javanese puppets came to have distorted bird-like profiles, and the Turkish puppets were held high enough for the heads of their shadows to be a little bit cut off, so that it could not be said that they were real reproductions of the human form. In Bali and in Siam, where the old Sanskrit-Hindu culture has remained up to the present day, the faces of the puppets are human.

How far was the Burmese puppet show under the influence of the shadow play? The question must be answered with reference to its history only before Bodawpaya, as it is obvious that after his time the show could not be and was not under any foreign influence.

That there was no direct influence of the Sanskrit and East-Indian shadow drama is certain because (1) a shadow show of any sort has never been known to the Burmese, and (2) the introduction of anything directly connected with the shadow show would bring with it semi-Sanskrit plays founded on the epics, upon which the East-Indian shadow drama was dependent, but as we have seen, no such plays were ever brought into Burma. In this connexion Sir William Ridgeway's theory that the puppets first became known to the Burmese when the 'Indian historical plays' were introduced, falls to the ground as no such plays were ever introduced. And (3) although a descendant of the Sanskrit puppet Vidusaka, whether he be called Punch or Karageuz or by some other name, is found in the East Indies, Turkey, China and other countries where the shadow drama had spread, there is no such puppet in Burma.

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177 The question whether there was any indirect influence at all is difficult to answer, and I dare not venture to express a definite opinion. I give below evidence for and against the possibility of such indirect influence. The balance of probability would perhaps seem to indicate that the Burmese obtained some idea of their puppet show from the shadow puppets of their neighbouring countries. Just as the decadent actors could borrow some ideas of European stage-craft

¹ Madge Anderson, *The Heroes of the Puppet Stage*.

without ever knowing or caring for the European drama itself, the Burmese may have borrowed their puppets and puppet stage-craft, without ever caring for the shadow drama itself. Such borrowings were possible although the shadow drama itself never reached Burma, for Burmese trading or raiding expeditions were in continuous contact with Siam, and to a lesser extent with Malaya and the East Indies.

1. (a) The Burmese puppets are worked in delicate detail, and are similar in this and other respects to the Javanese and Siamese figures.

(b) But the Burmese puppets are worked by strings, whereas most other eastern puppets are moved by sticks from below. However, some puppets of India and China are stringed.

2. (a) The Burmese puppet show-men make offerings to the spirits before a performance. Such offerings are also made in Java before the presentation of a shadow play.

(b) But, although the offerings are not made particularly to the thirty-seven *nats*, it may be that the puppet show-men, who consider their calling to be just a branch of the acting profession, are only following the custom of the living actors.

3. (a) The puppet show begins with dances by animals, which are perhaps reminiscent of the Javanese 'fantastic vine' with birds and monkeys on it. A monkey appears among the Burmese puppets.

(b) But Burmese folk feasts occasioned mimicry of animals, and that practice may have influenced the puppet show. Moreover, the Burmese animal puppets consist, in addition to the monkey, of the tiger, the elephant, and the horse. The *zatogyee* has no counterpart in the Javanese show, and the Burmese show has no bird puppets.

4. (a) Burmese women are not admitted to membership of a puppet troupe, and are not allowed to step on the puppet stage, even when no actual performance is in progress. Is this reminiscent of the Java show, where women are not allowed to see the actual puppets perform?

(b) But the practice may have been only an attempt by men to reserve the profession for themselves.

5. (a) An appropriate tune to identify a new animal puppet is played in Burma. This is perhaps akin to the Javanese practice of identifying a new figure that has entered by the orchestra playing a special tune.

(b) But the practice of identifying a new scene (which is almost the same as identifying a new figure) by an appropriate tune has always existed in the performances of living actors, and the puppet show-men may have borrowed it.

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APPENDIX I

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THE RAMA PLAY¹

The following extracts² from the *Rāmāyān of Valmiki*, *The Statue Play* attributed to Bhasa, and the Siamese-Burmese *Rama* illustrate

- i. the difference between the demon-king of the epic and the demon-king of Sanskrit plays; and
- ii. the indebtedness of the Siamese *Rama*, for its portrayal of the demon as a boastful villain, to the Sanskrit plays founded on the epic, rather than to the epic itself.

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From THE RAMAYANA³

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The DEMON in the guise of a hermit praises the beauty of SITA, who is surprised and alarmed at this unusual behaviour. He now announces himself.

With knitted brow and furious eye
The stranger made his fierce reply:
'In me, O fairest dame, behold,
The brother of the King of Gold,
The Lord of Ten Necks my title, named
Ravan, for might and valour famed.
Gods and Gandharva hosts I scare;
Snakes, spirits, birds that roam the air
Fly from my coming, wild with fear,
Trembling like men when Death is near.

What, O thou large-eyed dame, hast thou
To do with fallen Rama now,
From home and kingdom forced to fly
A wretched hermit soon to die?
Accept thy lover, nor refuse
The giant king who fondly woos.

¹ This play has been considered in chap. ii.

² Translation by R. T. H. Griffith, *The Rāmāyān of Valmiki*, reproduced by permission of Messrs E. J. Lazarus & Co., Benares.

³ [see pp. 151 ff., cat. 116 -- Analyst]

2

BURMA

131 Burma possessed no staples of trade to encourage

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2. LANDING-STAGE IN THE TIDAL REGION.

enterprise of the peaceable sort. Left entirely to her own resources, she developed her character in independence. It preserves a large measure of its original freshness and charm.

Detached though Burma lay from the contact of other civilisation, the seed-corn of a spiritual influence was brought to her shore from afar, and took root and spread until it pervaded her whole life. The one extraneous influence under which she fell proved of a paramount order. But the inspiration of Buddhism was broadly human, not racial. Every people might take its message to heart in their own individual way. The restraints it enjoined and the ideals it held up became the occasions for Burma to unfold her own inmost nature. The abounding treasury

of Buddhist legend furnished the subjects to exercise her poetic fancy. In the fifth century, A.D., long after Buddhism had declined at its source in India, and when it only prevailed in Ceylon, its real progress began among the people who were to give it an enduring home. Buddhism is popularly credited with five hundred millions of adherents. But the seven millions of Burma and perhaps a twentieth of that number in Ceylon, together with the half million Jains of India, are the practical Buddhists of the world. With the rest the profession has sunk to an empty name, as in China and Japan, or it is lax, as in Siam, or it is utterly transformed, as in Tibet.

101 The phrase *Further India* gives point to a wide misconception. The surprise of so many persons on finding that the Burmans have no *caste*—to [172] take the commonest instance—[564] betrays the notion that Burma is part of India



6. RUINS OF CITY GATE, PAGAN.

CHILDREN'S GAMES

9



18. YOUNG CHILDREN'S TOYS.

Manufactured toys are the most noticeable wares in the sale-booths. A universal toy is the seed from the giant pod of the *dō* creeper (No. 251). Like marbles with us, the seeds—*gōn-hnyin*—are the prizes of the game. In Sangermano's time (1783-1806) these games

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used to be played by adults. A characteristic boys' game is *slōppyt* (No. 25). Lots are cast for riders and horses. A ball or bundle is thrown from rider to rider till a player misses the catch, when all the riders dismount and scramble with the horses for the ball. The one who secures it becomes or remains a rider as the case may be. Boys run races for their own sport and that of their elders, and race their toy boats. They fight duels with their kites, each flier seeking to saw through his opponent's kite-line, for which purpose a length of string has been roughened with sand or pounded glass. The peg-top is a favourite toy. That it is indigenous is proved by certain proverbial sayings. Burman boys are more like our own and take to European games more kindly than other Asiatics (*cf.* p. 69). The toy of the day is the tricycle, which parents will pinch themselves to provide for their children, and which the happy possessors of will make the common property of all their playmates. Where children awaken such genuine interest, punishment is rarely called for and is never

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19. GAMES IN THE WATER.

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ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS

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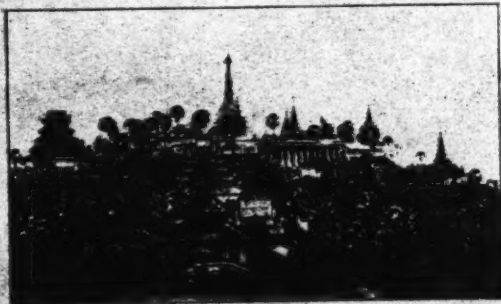


28. AGED YAHAN CARRIED ON YIN

The majority of the *kyauungs* and buildings of Burma are constructed on piles. The country at large is mountainous. The Burman race monopolises the flat lands in the basin of the upper Irawadi — "the narrows" (*Amya*) — in the same way as the Shan races do in the sphere of their influence and the Mun (or Talaing) race in the south (Pegu).

The quasi-aboriginal races occupy the hill-land and mountains. The plains-dweller settles as near as he can to the natural waterways with which Burma is abundantly provided. In the drought the rivers recede to great distances from their flood-level margins. In order to be close to the channels, the houses have to be on high piles. The races of Burma adhere to their practice of pile-building even on elevated sites, such as those of the temples. The Burman wood architecture appears to have developed through the exigencies of pile-building and under the influence, as regards decoration, of an exotic masonry style. The Burman style possesses a naïve charm recalling the art of the "ages of faith" in Western Europe. It has a certain resemblance to the wooden church-building of Norway. The style was in full vigour up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Since that time novelties of type and manufacture have crowded in faster than they could be assimilated into the indigenous arts, on which they are foisted crudely (Nos. 60, 99).

The affinities of Burman art above referred to, to the art of mediæval Europe, are extrinsic only. The "aspiring" character of the florid ornament, the quaint figures in their labyrinths of tracery, recall the crocketed niches and fantastic gargoyles of the



29. TEMPLE HILL

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60. DECADENT KYAUNG.

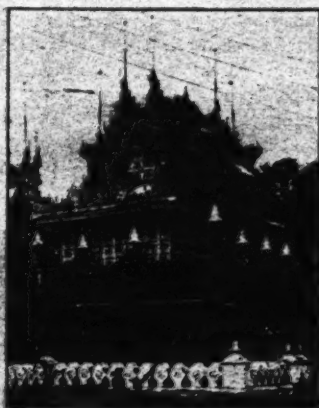
and monotonous feather-ornament of the Hindu gable (No. 74) has developed into the Burman flamboyant decoration. The bold finial is the sole element of the original which has been preserved literally (No. 62). The graduated ornament of the *pyatthat*, soaring above the verdure, recalls the proportions of some budding head-of-bloom—a case in point of the theory of the sources of architectural types, in the insensible suggestions of natural objects, expressed by Herbert Spencer. (*Essays*, vol. ii.) Through the Burman treatment types other than architectural, which Burma has borrowed, acquire a new and distinctive interest.

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When a *kyauing*, or any work of public utility, has been undertaken by the people of a village jointly, it is kept in good repair. But when it has been carried out at the cost of an individual—and this applies to most of the public works—the repairs are left to the founder and to his family, who have frequently

Gothic, especially in the richness of the *ensemble*. But the Burman decoration does not strike the eye as an efflorescence of the structure so much as an overlaying of it. The grandest work produces the effect of an elaborate model rather than a monumental achievement. The perspicuity of the play of forces operating in the structure, out of which the poetry of Gothic architecture flows, has a parallel in the Burman boat-building. But the effort which the land architecture incorporates, to interpret a masonry style in wood, was naturally productive of incongruities, despite the fact that the masonry was itself an interpretation of still earlier wood building. The outward incongruities have been mitigated in the unique style in which the genius of Burma has found expression. The stiff



61. ORNAMENTATION OF KYAUNG.

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68. WUT WITH IMAGES OF THE BUDDHA.

stars," the Burman says "countless as the temples of Pagán." "The remains at Pagán are all ecclesiastical with the exception of the city gates and ramparts (No. 6). The temple enclosures are now ploughed, but no building is cleared nor is any of the old material utilised. The

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Pagán monuments are of brick laid in clay and generally lime-plastered. Many have been wrecked by treasure-hunters. A few of the principal temples only are kept in repair. Pagán is said to have been exhausted by the temple-building of its kings, who, besides exacting labour from their subjects, must have imported skilled labour. An old saying is "the temple is finished and the country is ruined." The temple remains occupy an area of several thousand acres, in many places with just room for roads between the walls of the enclosures. The style of the Pagán buildings is Indian. It has been suggested that the Hindu type of work and possibly Buddhism itself reached Pagán by way of Annam: the Mun or Peguan race, from whom the Burmans adopted Buddhism, having a language of Annam type. The great ruins at Angkor Wat, two hundred miles east of Bangkok, have been compared to the ruins of Pagán. (See *Through the Buffer State*, by Surgeon-Major McGregor, 1896.) Such a route as this would help to account for certain features of Burman architecture foreign to India, the superposed roofs, and everted gable-ends. The Indian types may have reached Burma by this circuit as well as by the direct route.

The ancient temples of Pagán consist of brick corridors, one within the other, with vaulted pent roofs of masonry springing from the outer or lower wall to the inner or higher. The section of the vault is like that of a Gothic flying buttress. In the centre of all are colossal images



69. THADYA PATA AT THEKON.

ANCIENT REMAINS, PAGÁN

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71. TERRA-COTTA FIGURES AT THADYA PAYA.
THATON.

of the Buddha, set against the column which supports the dome or Hindu cone. The later domes are pure vaults without central support. In these ancient temples the conical *sadi* now so typical of Burma forms the finial only, held like a jewel, by four cusps. The lowermost portion of this structure resembles an inverted *thabait*, the name of the homologous part of the modern *sadi*. Possibly this forms the actual reliquary or is the symbol of the same.

An example of direct imitation of Indian monuments is the *Bawdi Paya*. It takes its name from the *Bo* tree at

Buddha Gáya in Bahár, and is a florid reproduction of the *stupa* there. It was built by King Zeyathinka about 1220 A.D.

The temple named after Ananda, the chief disciple of the Buddha, was built by King Kyansitthu about 1080 A.D. Both the temple (No. 8) and the *stupa* and *kyauing* adjoining (Nos. 64, 74) are in full preservation. The gigantic lattice gates of the inner temple are of teak-wood and probably coeval with the masonry.

The most imposing of the ancient monuments and the one which marks the best period of the Pagán architecture is Thappayinnyu Payá, built by King Alaung Sitthu, about 1100 A.D. (No. 73). Its height is two hundred feet or more.

In the mural decorations at Pagán the Indian character is as marked as in the buildings themselves. India has evidently furnished the subjects of the Burman designer and trained his style (Nos. 272, 94).

The Burman bricklayers had at one time lost the art of arch-building. A pointed arch like the Gothic is used in the temples of ancient Pagán (Nos. 75, 76).

The images of the Buddha (*sindu*) are the principal features of the interior of the ancient temples, the true character of

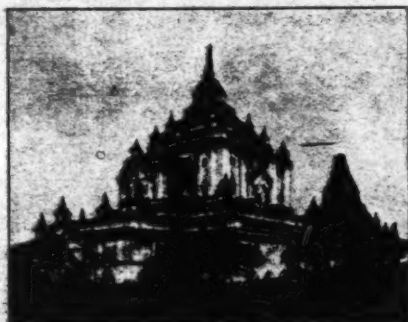


72. BAWDI PAYA, PAGAN.

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778 which is the same as that of the *sadi*. The images are of sandstone in Arakan,
 532 where, moreover, the Hindu caste-mark between the brows (*tika*) is not omitted
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73. THAPETHINYU PAYA, PAGAN.

as it commonly is in Burma. In Burma Proper and Pegu good stone is scarce, and the large immovable images are built of brick and plaster and finished in fine white lime. Movable images, up to several tons weight, are hewn in the marble of Sagding, the freestone of Taung-u (opposite Pagan), and are cast in brass. Lighter images are made of wood or of lacquer (*man-Paya*). The



74. KYAUNG AT ANANDA PAYA.

postures are the cross-legged, seated in contemplation (*tinbyingaw*), the erect posture (*mayyattaw*), preaching or receiving alms, and the reclining posture

CLOTHING

No kind of wool is indigenous

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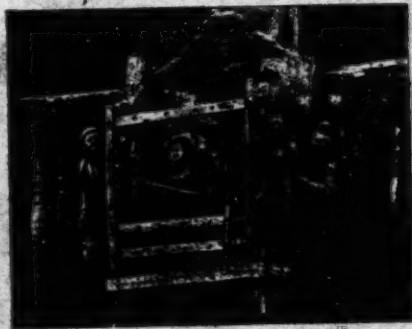


THE LAYING OUT THE WARP.

makes up the incongruous kit affected by the modern office clerks. With the increased use of body-linen have come the Indian washermen. The coloured stuffs are washed by the Burman women. The native dyes wash well, especially the silk dyes. An alkali-earth (*saggyu*) is found in Burma, but soap is of modern introduction, and is now sold in every bazar. Needles used to be brought to Burma from China, as well as scissors, though the latter are also fashioned in Burma; at present both are imported from Europe. Burmans work the needle from them, like other Asiatics. The work is pinned to a cushion at the head of a post planted on the work-box. The use of the thimble was unknown until tailors came over from India, but is now general. The bulk of the tailoring is in the hands of immigrants from China; but their prejudice against the sewing-machine is helping to transfer the business to the Burman women. Nearly every well-to-do family in the towns has its sewing-machine.

At sunrise the women start with their water-pots for the day's supply, and again before they cook the evening meal, which finishes the day's work. On the morning errand they do the most of their washing. In the evening they carry a spare cloth to change for the one they bathe in, which they wash and coil into a pad to put between the head and the water-

or is spun or woven in Burma. Caesar Frederick in 1569 mentions woollen cloth among the goods brought to Burma, *vid* Arakan. Web vests for boys and men, of European manufacture, are becoming general. The use of shoes of the European shape is bringing in the use of socks and stockings. The addition of a European shirt under the Burman jacket



151. BURMESE CARVING OF WEAVING-LOOM.

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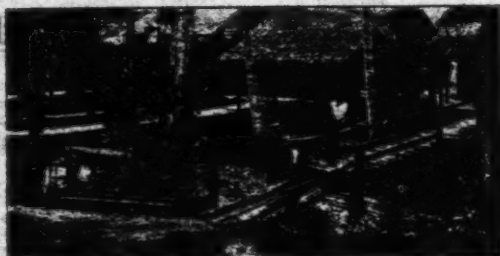
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188. VILLAGE CAUSEWAY IN THE TIDAL REGION.

the village head-man or other functionary, and round about, the houses of the villagers in more or less regular rows. The village streets are broad and in some places the houses are well-spaced, with plots of fruit-trees and vegetable-gardens between and at the back. No care is bestowed on the

roads except in a few riverain localities and tidal regions, where embanked roads and brick causeways are necessary. Trees are planted in front of the houses—coconut and betel palms, giant bamboo, the evergreens, tamarind, mango, and jack, for their fruit and shade; *gangaw*, *sagd*, and *padink* for their shade and scented flowers; *mizali*, *zi*, and several *figus* species. The screw-pine and various ornamental shrubs are cultivated—*tarossaga* (*frangipani*, No. 92), *sennaya*, gardenias, and roses. *Palma Christi* (castor-oil plant) is common for hedges. Plants cultivated by Europeans in the tropics—crotons, begonias, caladiums, balsams—are spreading everywhere. Pot-gardening is becoming a feature of the villages and even of the raft-houses and boats.

Well received as the stranger is by the people of the village, he has to brave the displeasure of the village curs. The dogs are the scavengers of the settlements, together with the crows and the myriads of ants. The termites ("white ants") account for the dry vegetable refuse, but they also invade the dwellings and destroy dry wood, mats, and thatch. Cats attach themselves to houses in the same way as dogs. A peculiarity of the domestic cat of Burma is

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189. VILLAGE RIVER-FRONT.

SUGAR

85



186. CANE-CRUSHING MILL.

they make a drink called *sa-ye* by adding to *tari* an infusion of herbs of weak narcotic properties.

In parts of the *kwin*, too heavily flooded for rice-cultivation, certain varieties of sugar-cane (*kyan*) thrive. These have been introduced from India within the last fifty years and have proved a means of extending cultivation. On dry soil, a thin variety of sugar-cane with a dark rind is cultivated, principally by Shan settlers. Sugar-cane is cut in November; cane tops are kept standing in water till the soil has been turned and they can be put out for the next crop. A great deal of sugar-cane is eaten like fruit. Cane-juice is pressed out in wooden mills between rollers accurately turned and geared by cogs or spiral teeth (No. 187). In an adjacent shed is an earthen furnace for boiling the juice, which is on a much larger scale than the palm-juice boiling. Earthen pots have been superseded by cast-iron cauldrons, at first of Shan manufacture, but now imported from Europe. The crushed stalks of the cane furnish a large part of the fuel. When the syrup has thickened it is poured into flat moulds to solidify. The product is hard and of a light brown colour (*kyanlagd*). It is eaten plain and is used for baking sweetmeats; none of it goes to refineries. Almost the whole

mented *tan-ye* (*tari*, 245
palm-wine) has the 273
alcoholic strength of
small beer. Most of
the juice is boiled down
for the sake of the
sugar. Drinkers of *tari* [249]
are few among the Bur-
mans. Women are uni-
versally abstainers. The
Burmans do not brew
or distil liquor of any
kind, but in some places



188. BOILING DOWN THE CANE-JUICE.

POTTERY AND BRICK

97



211. LATHE POTTERY.

comes upon bricks, and on nearly every hill bricks bear evidence that at some time a *sedi* had crowned the top. In the moist region the disintegrating effect of the vegetation is such that frequently no indication remains of the form of the original structure. The use of brick doubtless came in with the early Buddhist architecture exemplified at Pagan. The brick-fields are on the confines of the rice-fields, and of the same character as to soil, a light loam. The work begins in November after the ground has dried. The surface soil is rejected and the earth dug with mattocks a yard or two deep. The clods are soaked in water and trodden into a doughy mass with an admixture of rice husk. The bricks are moulded direct on the ground, which has been smoothed beforehand, and are left to dry in the sun (No. 181). Before stacking the dried bricks, the lower or rough edge is trimmed with a *da*. The commonest size of brick is 12" x 6" x 1 1/2". A burn consists of ten thousand bricks and sells for about forty-five rupees. In the dry zone, brick has always been used for house-building to some extent, unless when prohibited by the government. In the south, the brick-work is invariably plastered over with *ingade* to prevent the clay mortar from washing out. Now that bricklaying in Pegu has passed into the hands of masons from India, lime-mortar is usual.

The limestone rocks which are a feature of the Eastern Peninsula, rise abruptly from the plains to heights of one to three thousand feet (No. 107). They are honeycombed with fissures which facilitate quarrying. During the floods, boats can approach and be loaded with the stone. Lime is used for whitewash, plaster, mortar, and for chewing

comes upon bricks, and on nearly every hill bricks bear evidence that at some time a *sedi* had crowned the top. In the moist region the disintegrating effect of the vegetation is such that frequently no indication remains of the form of the original structure. The use of brick doubtless came in with the early Buddhist architecture exemplified at Pagan. The brick-fields are on the confines of the rice-fields, and of the same character as to soil, a light loam. The work begins in November after the ground has dried. The surface soil is rejected and the earth dug with mattocks a yard or two deep. The clods are soaked in water and trodden into a doughy mass with an admixture of rice husk. The bricks are

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[323]



212. FANCY POTTERY, SHAN.

[323]

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BURMA

288
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643



217. PLASTERERS' SCAFFOLD ON ZEDU.

(Kathé) excel in this work and form colonies for the industry. Attempts have been made in Europe to imitate the scroll-patterns on the Jacquard loom, as well as to print them. But the imitations fall too far short of the original, which is nearly the same front and back. The best *lan-tayd* silks cost ten to fifteen rupees the square foot, which makes two hundred to three hundred rupees for the *pass*. Only an inch or two a day can be woven. Italian methods of carding, dyeing, and finishing silk, were introduced by the late King, Mindôn Min, and have helped to develop an important industry in Mandalay. Stripe and tartan patterns are woven in this way, chiefly from China silk. Fine texture and delicate tints are aimed at, rather than rich colour and design. The *pass* of

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twenty cubits, one cubit wide, costs ten to twenty rupees.

The Burman umbrella (*st*) is on the Chinese model—a bamboo frame with paper cover. The Chinese umbrella has a thin paper cover, the Burman has bast-paper, which outlasts several of the other. But the Chinese umbrellas are cheaper, better waterproofed, and sun-proof. The Burman *st* is waterproofed by occasional oiling with crude petroleum. A waterproof size made from the fruit of the *st* is used for fixing the paper to the ribs and the cotton twines that connect them. The red, the gilt and the white umbrellas are emblems of state. The first two denote official rank, according to the number assigned. Such umbrellas have stems of turned wood, six to eight feet long, to allow of the *st* being borne over the officer on horseback or in his chariot, by attendants on foot (No. 375). The

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[532]



219. SCULPTURING MARBLE IMAGES.

LACQUER WARE

101



218. ROPE-WALK.

inner side is brightly decorated with floss silks. Gilt umbrellas (*shwa-dt*) are dedicated in the *kyauing*, but are not actually used. The white umbrella (*thyaung*) is the emblem of sovereignty. The *thyaung* is set above the images of the Buddha and above the remains of the *yahna*, who are assumed at their death to enter upon a higher spiritual stage. The

metal canopy surmounting the *sadi* is a conventionalised *H* (No. 232). Of late, European umbrellas have become a staple import of Burma.

Lacquer-ware vessels and utensils—light, durable, and watertight—are made with the help of *thissi*, the exudation of the bark of *Melanorrhoea ussistissima*, a common tree of the *in* forest. The gum blackens to jet on exposure to the air. It dries slower than the "Japan black" of commerce, but is much tougher; it sells for two to three rupees a viss. *Thissi* is applied to wood turnery and bamboo wickerwork, either plain or with pigments, generally with vermilion. The commonest lacquer goods are platters (*hyat* and *lamaglan*), which are turned of teak or *yamant* wood and given two or three coats of *thissi*. After the platters, the principal article of lacquer-ware is the betel-box (*kaw-dt*). Coarse lacquering is done everywhere in the dry region, but the betel-box industry is peculiar to Pagan. The advantage of lacquer-ware and of a deep cover for the betel-box, is to keep the green leaf fresh. At first sight it appears incredible that these exact cylindrical boxes with their trays and covers, fitting as if each piece had been turned out of the block, should start from a wicker-work frame. Yet so it is; the models are painted so true that the rest



22. WELL-PEOPLE TWISTING ROPE.

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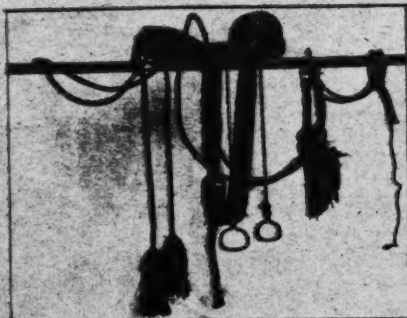
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[283]

IRONWORK

105



228. BURMAN HORSE-FURNITURE.

gongs (*manng*, No. 322) have very sonorous qualities. Copper and brass utensils are not used by the Burmans for cooking, but brass is used for fruit-platters, water-cups and bowls, betel-boxes and spit-toons, mortars, scales and weights, cow-bells, and furniture for horse and bullock harness.

The import of iron and steel began centuries ago, nevertheless blades of Shan steel and manufacture are still accounted the best. With the exception of Shan settlers, the Burmans were the

only blacksmiths of the country till the Chinese blacksmiths arrived. The hill-people depended for their chief implement and their weapons upon the dominant races. The Burman forge is the same as the Shan, on a bigger scale. The hearth is at the ground-level, with a pit in front, to enable the smith to stand up to his work if needful. He does most of it sitting on a peculiar round-backed seat to the right of the blast. The anvil is like a hammer-head, set upright in a block of wood. There is a trough shaped like a canoe for quenching the work and the tools. The hammers are from one to five pounds, the pincers of the universal pattern.

There are the ordinary punches and sets. The blast is on the plan of the bamboo blast in No. 235, but has large cylinders of palm trunks in which pistons, packed with feathers, are worked alternately. The Chinese blacksmith had already adopted the European anvil and heavy sledge-hammer for forging iron axles and tyres, anchors and grappels. These the Burman has adopted in turn. The bench-vice is also universal. The Chinaman adheres to his horizontal wooden box-blast, fitted with valves like a double-action pump, whereas the



229. BURMAN BLACKSMITH (OLD STYLE).

GOLD AND SILVER

107



322. CANOPY OF GREAT
ZEDN (71. 30. 101).

refilled, and after seven or eight hours' work as many grains weight of gold flakes will have accumulated in the depression at the centre. The out-turn of a steady worker is three to five tikals of gold in the season.

The stock in trade of the gold and silver worker consists of a bamboo blast, clay crucibles, blowpipe, solder and flux, aquafortis and mercury, hammers, punches and anvils of bronze and iron, wire-plate and beading-plate. Bullion is furnished by the customer, who pays from one half up to the full weight, in

thing like a spoke-shave (*daing-dyaik*), for the rough shaping of the blades after forging, to save their files. The blacksmiths make the axes of the country also. The old Burman axe consists of a long-handled wooden mallet with an iron tip like a small spade. The smiths also make spear-heads for the hill-people, iron shoes for ploughs, mattocks and hoes, tires and axles of carts, dee nails for boats, nippers for sugar-cane and betel-nut, and other tools. They do repairs of locks and fire-arms. A special class of iron-work is making *ti* for *zodi*. The tinsmith's trade was unknown in Burma until fifty years ago. In Pegu it is still in Indian hands; but in Mandalay the Burman tinsmiths are unequalled.

Argentiferous galena is found in Burma, but the ore barely repays working for the sake of the lead. The silver used in Burma and most of the gold is imported from China, India, and Europe. A dozen villages in different parts of Burma get a living by sifting the sand of streams which bear gold. A broad thin wooden dish shaped like a flat cone is filled with sand and gravel, and worked at the water-level with a rotary movement, by which the lighter material is driven out centrifugally. The dish is filled and



323. MOUNTAIN CASCADE.

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412

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326

GOLD AND SILVER

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306
326

306



287. TOWN SILVERSMITH.

of plain gold bangles (*lah-hant*), and their ear-plugs consist of a roll of sheet-gold coiled to the thickness of a finger. The Burmese admire a red-yellow gold with dull surface. They enhance the effect by a red colouring of the interstices of the work, in the same way as the Chinese do. Neck ornaments (*day*) are of several kinds. The commonest one used to be the thick roll of gold filigree, worn in front of the neck. This is now replaced by *day* of several chains, for the most part jewelled. On the breast is worn the broad *dalasin*, also formerly of filigree, but now of jewels and pearls. Strings of real and imitation pearls are worn; and jewelled pins

and gold or jewelled combs in the hair. Rings are worn on the fingers and gold filigree buttons of the Chinese type on the jackets. The last two are the only ornaments now used by men. Anklets are worn by children.

Gold and silver coinage on a European model was adopted by the kings of Burma about the middle of the nineteenth century—the "peacock" coins, struck from dies engraved in Paris. Rough coins of lead used to circulate. The coins shown in No. 338 are those of Arakan kings from 1500 to 1750 A.D., from the collection of the late Mr. C. H. White. Before the introduction of coinage,

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288. SILVER COINS OF THE ARAKAN KINGS.



239. GOLD-BEATERS.

circulates in Burma is three times the value of the lowest Indian coin. Notes have no circulation as yet among the Burmans, although they now bear their figures of value in Burmese.

316 Rubies and sapphires (*kyanm-*
306 *myat*) are separated from the sand and gravel of certain localities, notably Mogók, in the same way as gold is. Hard gems are cut with gem-dust on a horizontal wheel driven by a fly-wheel and treadle in a regular lathe-stand. Rock-crystal is cut in this way and also on a hone. Jade is found at Mogaung and is exported to China. Amber is found at Bamáw.

306 Gold-leaf is used in enormous quantities for gilding *zedi* and images. Only pure gold is employed. The paper for separating the gold-leaf in the book in

gold and silver bullion were used for exchange, as they still are in the Shan States. Chinese gold is current in the form of foil with the market stamp of fineness. It can be conveniently cut with scissors and weighed. Travellers often carry their bullion in this form. Silver is used by the Shans in the form of ingots which have to be hewn and assayed when making a purchase. The standard for commodities, wages and rent is silver, the fluctuation being referred to the gold. The lowest coin that



340. ALCHEMISTS.

CARPENTRY

119

313
133

282. ROPE-STATION ON THE SALWEEN (KYODAN).

current, a remarkable device is employed. Two ten-foot handspikes, with a shoulder two feet above the point, have mooring-rattans from each end of the raft, one hundred feet long and an inch thick, bent on to them. One of these is sent ashore from the forward end of the raft and worked like a plough in the bank, going deeper as the raft slews round and the tension increases, and so

stopping its way by degrees. If the first attempt fails a second is made from the other end of the raft, which is then the forward one. Arrived in port the logs are dragged up the mud-banks by elephants. But when the path is blocked, a powerful elephant sometimes carries a log bodily. The whole of the operations of bringing the timber to market are combined by a timber-broker (forester, *thiggaung*).

[463]

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[177]

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Teak cuts readily, though it blunts the tools very soon. There is little waste. Sawn planks are displacing bamboo for the better-class houses. Sawyers earn from one-half to one rupee a day. The indigenous carpenter's tools were a small adze (*pidol*), chisels and gouges (*sauk*), awls (*lun*), and a rough saw (*hiwa*), besides *del* and axe (*paussein*). The Burman adopted the Chinese plane (*yuk-haw*, "selecting-shave") with the Chinese straddle bench. The English carpenter's rule is also general. When the impulse to good house-building was given by the production of cheap planks, the immigrants from China got the whole of the work. The Burmans have begun to oust them from the heavy carpentering and from the joinery as well. Ordinary Burman carpenters earn $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee a day, the better workmen 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ rupees a day, compared with the Chinaman's 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ rupees. The wood-work is left

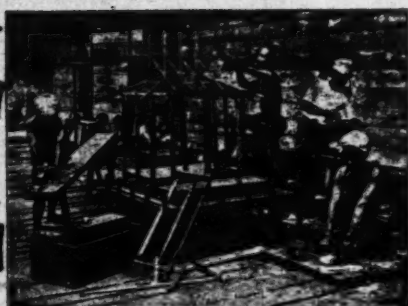


283. BINDING THE LOGS INTO RAFTS.

PAINTING AND DESIGN

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[321]
531
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[322]



297. BURMAN CARPENTERS.

arbour of tracery, which entirely encloses them. Ivory hafts and scabbards of daggers and sabres are ornamented in the same way. The ivory carving is not polished.

The conventional flat design, painting and embroidery exhibit affinities to the Indian decoration of the ancient temples (Nos. 94, 272). The anachronisms and other naiveties of our mediæval designers are paralleled in modern Burma; witness the introduction of British officers with their field-

glasses in the design of the Prince of Pagán destroying the monster at Hngepyittauung (No. 224). The medium used for painting is a coarse tempera. From the labels attached to European goods, many of which are excellent in design and colour, lessons in colouring and perspective have been learned. From photographs, ideas of accuracy have been gathered, and from illustrated newspapers, ideas of composition. Neither carver nor designer ever uses a model. The painter of No. 433 confessed that he had not seen the place himself; he had it described to him. In pure design without colour, the *shwezawé* work is the best. It is a kind of drawing in lacquer, which appears black on a gold ground (No. 96). Of late the Burmans have attempted cuts on type-metal for illustrations of books (No. 276). They are executed with chisel and punch; the graver is unknown.

Ancient inscriptions are rare in Burma, although the *thamding*, or depository for slabs recording the circumstances of religious foundations, is a recognised institution. In many of the *thamding* at Pagán may be seen the ancient *Pāli* square character, of which the Burmese round character is a development. The square character is preserved in the *kambawé* (No. 46). The late King Mindón Min caused the whole of the *Pāli* text of the Tripitaka to be

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298. BURMAN TURNER.

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still is used by the Shans for their sacred MSS. The Burmans use the paper chiefly in the form of stiff tablets (*parabéik*), blackened, like the *thimbon*, for writing on with a steatite pencil. Burmese type was cut (No. 452) and the first printing-plant set up in Burma by the American Baptist Mission. At present



274. PALM-LEAF MS.

there are a number of printing establishments owned by Burmans, from which quite a literature of their religious works has issued. At first the Buddhists of Burma considered print not good enough for the scripture canon. Modernised legends of the Buddha in his previous incarnations (*sas*) are beginning to form the foundation of a romance-literature of indigenous type. Newspapers have not yet taken a firm hold, even in the large towns; but news travels very fast in the ordinary way, especially news about the prices of goods. This western art has not contributed to the spread of western knowledge in the way that might be expected. The Yaw Mindyi, a minister of the late King Mindón Min, made a most praiseworthy effort to popularise western ideas in a series of MS. treatises. A native undertaking upon a grand scale—nothing less than a Burmese encyclopaedia—was on foot in the sixties, but fell through for want of organised support. In Japan, an analogous enterprise was successful. What applies to concerted action in matters like the above, applies equally to political combination. Few Burmans, even after years of schooling, learn enough to read an English newspaper with profit. To this day there is no Burmese manual for the study of English. The scholars learn only enough of the language to procure them employment as accountants and copyists. Similarly, there are few English who can understand a Burmese newspaper.

Dealers, with the exception of the



275. COPYIST AT WORK.



278. SHAMPOOING (A-HNEIK).

Dysentery is much less frequent in natives than in European residents. Consumption and pneumonia are rare, but coughs and bronchitis are common. Cancer is not unknown. Measles and chicken-pox follow a mild course. Scarlet fever does not occur, nor does typhus. It is uncertain whether typhoid fever existed in Burma or has been introduced; it is rare among the natives, but attacks Europeans in a bad form. Venereal diseases lurk in the towns. (For leprosy, see p. 41.) Diarrhoea and cholera recrudescence every hot season. There are no records of other pestilence. Small-pox rages in severe epidemics, but with greatly diminished incidence where vaccination has been accepted. Native practitioners were acquainted with inoculation. In introducing voluntary vaccination the British Government has met with great success. The introduction of this

measure exemplifies how grotesque the arguments may be that prevail upon the people. The alleged motive of the government was too improbable; so wisecracks cast about for another. What more likely than a dream of the Queen of England—that a child existed in Burma who would overthrow her dominion! This child could not be known, but it would be reached and removed by the plan of poisoning the blood of the whole generation. It was many years before



279. HOROSCOPE ON PALM-LEAF.

the myth was dispelled. In 1894, when small-pox was known to be approaching from Karenni, the Karén (nat-worshipping) village of Biliin-Mêwaing among others, consisting of sixty souls, submitted to vaccination. The lymph took in all but sixteen cases. Six months later small-pox reached the locality. Twelve

BOATS AND BOATMEN

137



308. BURMAN CARTWRIGHTS.

ngapi, dried fish, salt and rice, besides imported goods. They bring down the manufactures of the North—cutch, lacquer, images, and *parti-kaya* wares. They have to endure a formidable competition from the river steamers. In its existing form, the boat of Burma presents no near affinity to the boats of neighbouring peoples. The types of architecture which the Burmans borrowed from

India they have treated in a distinctive way which gives them independent interest. But the art which culminates in the stately ship of the Irawadi is purely their own achievement. The work derives unity from the noble balance of the masses and life from the spirited sweep of the curves. The severity of line is relieved by plastic incident in the rich carving. The structure itself is patent and not concealed (with the exception noted), and the decoration goes hand in hand with it.

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315] Besides their own type of boat, the Shan type (No. 320) has been developed into a large craft for carrying earth-oil in bulk—the *peingdu*. Two long, partially-hollowed teak logs form the sides of the lower hull, with several thick planks intervening, for the flat bottom. Two planks above these complete the sides, all held together by nails and ribs as in the *laungdt*. There are outriggered bamboo galleries for the crew to row and pole, which allow

of the deck-house being carried from end to end, providing accommodation for several families. The rig is the same as in the *laungdt*. In tidal and salt waters, boats have to be beached once a month to bream the bottoms and destroy the teredo. The rest of the woodwork and tackle is protected with earth-oil.

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[177] The boats of Arakan are on Indian lines. There is



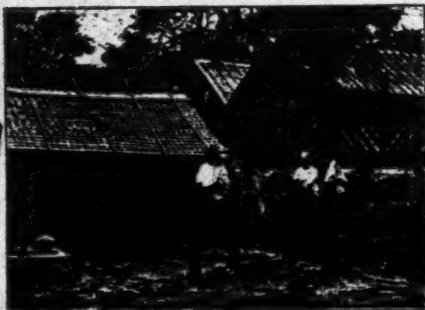
309. BUFFALO-CART.

CARTS AND ROADS

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493

[492]



310 BURMAN PONIES.

for heavy wheels and the light spider wheels he uses in pleasure and racing-carts. He employs a very long hub to steady the wheel, which is as yet unprovided with turned axles and boxes. *Padduk* and *pyinkad* wood are used for hubs, with plain iron bushes at the ends. Teak is used for spokes and felloes. The axle is of imported round bar iron, with plain linch-pins; the end of the wooden axle-bed forms

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the shoulder. The bar-iron for tyres is likewise imported. Imported springs are coming into use for the light carts. European vehicles built by Chinese are used by well-to-do Burmans in the towns; they exemplify to the natives a novel departure in luxury, in which not splendour but comfort is the standard.

491
487

The country roads are merely the tracks made by the carts. As the bullocks travel in the line of the wheels, the road is passable until the ruts are so deep that the axle-bed scrapes the mound in the centre. Then the track is abandoned for one to the right or left. The same thing happens when the road is too heavy or when a tree falls over it. In the rice country the grain is carted across the fields. But in the dry zone a roadway is left between the fences of the fields, as is also the case in the eastern hill-plateaux. A few state roads (*minlan*) following the high ground used to be kept clear, but the only regular road-making was done near to the capital. Cart-tracks do not penetrate the hill districts to any distance.

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492

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The Burman pony is small—eleven to thirteen hands—but is said to have the best constitution and the greatest endurance of any breed. In Pegu, with its damp climate, the breed does not flourish so well as in the North. The ponies exported from Pegu are brought down from the



311. WAYSIDE REST-HOUSE.

ALIEN RACES

161

Ba
Bse trees. All that the villagers asked for (and of course got) was exemption from
241 land-tax. Another hopeful feature is that the Burman is not devoid of the
731 quality of self-criticism. With the Indian retail trader comes also the wholesale
563 merchant—Persian, Parsi, Súrati, Chetti and Bania. And the Burmans at large
Ba accept the situation, never dreaming that by travelling abroad and seeing for
Bse themselves how other nations manage and how they fare, they might learn to
463 conduct their own business, and help to save Burma from sinking to the level of
[77] proletariat countries. Natives of India and China have learned so much in
563 their capacities of assistants to European merchants that they are getting the
438 retail trade in European goods to themselves. Even as importers, with their
agents in Europe, they are making themselves independent of the European
merchant in the East. The European spheres of activity on which Burmans

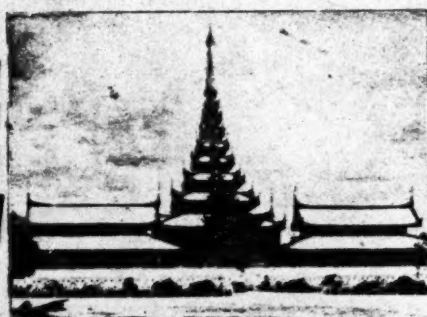


308. EUROPEAN TYPE OF HOUSE.

have entered are saw-mill enterprise and the profession of advocacy, in which latter they have attained a high standing.

Ba
167 To the Burman, the native of India is the foreigner *par excellence*—*Kald*—
563 and shares the disrepute that a stay-at-home people commonly accord to the
Bse foreigner, especially when he is a needy one. To them he is the dog that eats
609 the crumbs which fall from his table ("*Kwe-Kald!*"). While the Chinaman,
563 despite his uncouthness and uncanny parasitic trade, is considered an eligible
man, *Kald-mayd*—nigger's wife—is a term of reproach. The *Kald* half-breeds
are called *Zerbddi*. They appear to possess fewer good qualities than either
of the pure races. The Euro-Burman half-breeds are called *Baytnjt*—(Feringhi,
the Indian equivalent of Frank) explained by the Burmans as *Baytn-dyl*
(adherent of) the Great Prince (the Pope).

Ba Europeans are the only remaining foreigners whom the Burmans encounter,
Bse excepting a few Armenians, Jews and Malaya. Armenians were beginning to play
563



380. PALACE FRONT AND SPIRE.

prominent are honorary magistrates. Independent spirit is on the increase; the officials have to reckon with a new temper in the people. Nevertheless, in municipal councils the supineness and complaisance of the native members are calculated to stultify the position accorded to them. Road-making and sanitation do not arouse their interest, and the local excise, the matter they long to deal with, is excluded from their jurisdiction (cf. p. 157). The *thadyt* personally measures the fields, collects the land-tax and poll-tax from house to house, in such a circle as he can make the circuit of twice a year, and receives commission on the amount. He reports on matters within his circle. As many revenue-circles as a native magistrate can personally control are united into a township, under a *myobk*, who at the same time supervises the co-ordinate grades of police distributed in the township. He publicly tries criminal and civil cases, under his powers as magistrate, by codes of law and procedure accessible to everybody. These codes form the most valuable models of system, in the vernacular, up to the present. By their help both judges and advocates have trained themselves in law. Five to eight townships, according to facilities for

The British administration preserves the native official machinery, from the *thadyt* to the *myobk*, augmenting the numbers so as to reach every part of the area and curtailing the powers. Under native régime even *thadyts* might be *ddbaing*. The new régime takes account of the village *ladyts* for the sake of their moral influence; many of them have been invested with power to compose differences up to small amounts, and some of the more



381. BURMAN PRINCESS.

APPENDICES

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The Burmans do not appreciate singing in a low pitch. They do not admire men's voices in the baritone or the bass. A natural is considered the standard pitch for men's and D-natural for women's voices. The higher the tenor the more it is admired. Their ideal singer is a tenor approaching a contralto. On the other hand a soprano voice is less admired than a contralto. The propensity is to cultivate high voices in the men and low voices in the women. The professional singers are true artists and are able to command the feelings of their hearers. The *agel-dyin shaw*—weeping song—invariably brings tears to the eyes of the hearers. The love songs are full of pathos. An indispensable scene in all the operas is the separation and meeting again of the lovers. It is the most interesting part of the play and is eagerly awaited by the play-goers.

The best songs are sung in these scenes and the best talents of the performers called into play. The Burman is readily excited by music; the dancing songs never fail to set his hands and legs going. There is a style of martial music played at boxing-matches, races, and grand tugs-of-war which excites the Burmans to action. The performance of a complete Burmese band is a study in itself. Considering that the musicians play without a score, the harmony and strict time they observe are truly wonderful.

A few specimens of genuine Burmese music are appended (pp. 226-230). No. 1 is a song in the major scale, with harp accompaniment. The first twenty bars constitute the usual prelude to music of this kind. The tendency of the Burmese musician is to repeat the vocal part as an interlude, with all the variations and embellishments he can add. The last four bars are also usually played as a symphony at the end of each verse. The prelude and symphony are not peculiar to this song but are played with all songs of the same description. No. 2 is a specimen of another style, more suited for an orchestra. Nos. 3 and 4 are examples in the minor scale. Both are very ancient. No. 3 is called *Nau-thein ydleya*. It used to be played on the entrance of the king to the Audience Hall and is the true national anthem of the Burmans. Its beauty and grandeur need no comment. No. 4 is a popular lullaby.

It is a matter for great regret that the beautiful music which the Burmans unquestionably possess is being forgotten. The modern tendency is to imitate European and Indian themes, and the time is not distant when genuine Burmese music will be a thing of the past.



454. THE BURMESE HARP AND DULCIMER (p. 176).

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APPENDIX E.

MEASURES.

TIME.

Obsolete	10 fillips (<i>harant</i>)	= 1 <i>hyas</i>
	6 <i>hyas</i>	= 1 <i>hassan</i> .
	60 <i>hassan</i>	= 1 hour (<i>nayd</i>).
	60 hours	= 1 day (<i>nat</i>).
	30 days	= 1 month (<i>la</i>).
	12 months	= 1 year (<i>hant</i>).

[77]

Since the introduction of clocks and watches the old day of sixty *nayd* has become obsolete and the day of twenty-four hours universal. The days of the week are named after the sun, moon, and planets, correspondingly to our own. The month is divided into the waxing (*lasun*) and the waning (*ladyidyaw*) moon of fifteen days each, alternately with months of fifteen days waxing and fourteen days waning. Seven years in every nineteen admit an intercalary month of thirty days. In leap years the month *Wad* is repeated under the name *Datiya Wad*.

The months correspond more or less with our months, as follows:—

1. <i>Kasle</i> . . . 30 days, April to May.	7. <i>Tandungun</i> 30 days, October to November.
2. <i>Nayin</i> . . . 29 " May to June.	8. <i>Nadaw</i> . . . 29 " November to December.
3. <i>Wad</i> . . . 30 " June to July.	9. <i>Pyidat</i> . . . 30 " December to January.
4. <i>Wapung</i> . . . 29 " July to August.	10. <i>Takhsu</i> . . . 29 " January to February.
5. <i>Tawthalin</i> 30 " August to September.	11. <i>Taklung</i> . . . 30 " February to March.
6. <i>Thadindyt</i> 29 " September to October.	12. <i>Tayd</i> . . . 29 " March to April.

The present era (*shagayit*) commenced in 638 A.D. Thus the year 1900 A.D. is the Burmese year 1261-62.

LENGTH.

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4 grains of rice = 1 finger-breadth (<i>lettathir</i>).	6 grains = 1 thumb (inch, <i>lawna</i>).
8 <i>thit</i> . . . = 1 <i>maut</i> (breadth of palm with thumb extended, 6 inches).	2 <i>maut</i> = 1 <i>pat</i> (foot, 12 inches, 30.5 c.m.).
12 <i>thit</i> . . . = 1 <i>hau</i> (span, 9 inches).	4 <i>laung</i> = 1 <i>Alan</i> (span, forearm, 6 feet).
2 <i>hau</i> . . . = 1 <i>laung</i> (cubit, 18 inches).	
7 <i>laung</i> . . . = 1 <i>su</i> .	
300 <i>su</i> . . . = <i>myetha-dwin</i> (one mile, 1609.33 metres).	
1000 <i>su</i> . . . = 1 <i>laing</i> .	
6400 <i>su</i> . . . = 1 <i>yathana</i> (obsolete).	

CAPACITY.

1 <i>nat</i> (sixty-fourth).	1 pint 0.367
4 <i>nat</i> = 1 <i>hyl</i> (sixteenth).	2 quarts
2 <i>hyl</i> = 1 <i>nayd</i> (eighth).	1 gallon 4.543
2 <i>nayd</i> = 1 <i>sat</i> (quarter).	2 gallons
3 <i>sat</i> = 1 <i>gud</i> (half).	4 "
2 <i>gud</i> = 1 <i>din</i> (bushel).	8 " 36.346

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779* in the middle of the last century, that Burmese women not only enjoyed a much freer and higher position than elsewhere in the East but, in some matters, had attained rights that their sisters in England were still seeking to obtain.²⁶ These and similar aspects of Burmese life must be attributed in large degree to the dominant influence of Buddhism in a country which has been left for hundreds of years, shut away from the surrounding world by its seaboard and mountain barriers, to work out its own salvation with only occasional interference from outside until modern times.

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177 It is possible that the first Buddhist monastery in Burma was established more than two thousand years ago. While we may be sceptical of the legend which attributes the conversion of the first Burmese disciples to the Buddha himself, there is perhaps less reason than formerly to question the persistent Burmese tradition that missionaries were sent from India to Burma after the Third Great Council in the time of Aśoka. We have, at any rate, shreds of reliable evidence relating to the early centuries of the Christian era. In Burma, as elsewhere, the archaeologist has been active in recent years and there are also illuminating references in Chinese and other texts. Examining the evidence now available, Mr. Nihar-Ranjan Ray has presented a substantial argument for the conclusion that Buddhism was introduced to Burma possibly in Aśoka's day, probably by the third century A.D. and certainly by the fifth century A.D.²⁷ In these earlier centuries, Burma was parcelled into small kingdoms, and all that can be said is that, at certain capitals, there were strong centres of Buddhist influence.²⁸

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177 It is, however, sufficient for our present purpose to be able to trace the dominating influence of Buddhism throughout the country from the eleventh century onwards. In this century, the turning point in Burmese story, the curtain of history lifts to reveal A-naw-ra-hita, the Burmese Constantine, moving southwards from his capital at Pagan to vanquish the king of Thaton and annex his dominion. According to the Burmese chroniclers, the motive for this advance was not mere lust of conquest but zeal for the true faith. King A-naw-ra-hita had been converted by a monk from the south, Shin Araham of Thaton. But 'without the scriptures there can be no study, without study there can be no intuition.' To obtain these scriptures, the Pali scriptures, A-naw-ra-hita must needs subdue his rival at Thaton who possessed them.

000 What is of further importance for our present inquiry is the fact that

²⁶ Forbes, *British Burma and Its People*, chap. III, p. 55.

²⁷ Ray, *op. cit.* chap. I, pp. 83ff.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. I, pp. 83ff., 81; cf. Taw Sein Kho, *Census of India Report* (Burma 1901), XII, 22.

INTRODUCTION

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What is of further importance for our present inquiry is the fact that the tradition thus established throughout Burma was the Hinayāna tradition, not the Mahāyāna.²⁰ It will therefore be the more significant if we find in Burmese Buddhism a positive conception of Nirvana, for, in the past, scholars have frequently associated a negative conception with the Hinayāna tradition, enlarging the distance between the two schools: Nirvana might spell paradise in China or Japan, it was argued, but for Southern Buddhists it was the Void.

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There were, it is true, outposts of the Mahāyāna faith in Burma, notably at Pagan, where Mahāyāna cults survived for perhaps two centuries after A-naw-ra-ha's conversion, tolerated by the now dominating Hinayāna tradition which absorbed some elements of the sister faith.²¹ There is also evidence, not only of Mahāyāna rivalry, but also of Brahmanical Hinduism (as at Pagan) in Southern Burma in the earlier centuries.²²

A first glance at the map may occasion surprise that Mahāyāna influence on Burmese Buddhism was not more considerable, for China, where the Mahāyāna tradition thrived for several centuries, is just across the north east border and the Burmese themselves are a Mongolian race. A second glance, however, discovers the far distances between centres of influence. There is a sweeping borderland of mountain ranges and remote valleys, and, in the earlier centuries, the buffer state of Nanchao lay in between China and the Burmese kingdoms. The sea route from India was the easier route to Southern Burma and Indian traders and adventurers were the forerunners of Indian missionaries.

When all qualifications have been made, we must conclude that the formative tradition of Buddhism in Burma was the Hinayāna, introduced from India and nourished from Ceylon. And from the eleventh century onwards, "the stronger vitality of the Southern school completely absorbed, assimilated and obliterated the Northern school."²³

The royal encouragement given by A-naw-ra-ha was frequently echoed by later rulers. Burmese kings were styled 'great Captains of the Law,' and as late as the nineteenth century good King Mindon convened the 'Fifth Buddhist Council' at Mandalay, when the scriptures were engraved on over seven hundred tablets of marble.

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²⁰ The term, Hinayāna, is sometimes regarded as disparaging. 'Southern' or 'Theravāda' Buddhism might be preferred in this connection, but it is probably less confusing to use the terms now familiar in the West.

²¹ Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma*, p. 93, and *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 150ff.

²² Ray, *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 86, 87; cf. Taw Sein Kho, *Census Report (Burma, 1901)*, p. 32.

²³ Taw Sein Kho, *ibid.*, p. 32.

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But Burmese kings were not always good. The monasteries which became centres of community life in village after village have to be pictured more often against a dark background of marauding armies, political feud and violent revolt. This chequered history gives point to the suggestion that Burma owes its civilisation and 'the preservation of ... moral and mental balance' very largely to the Buddhist Order which persisted and grew apace through all vicissitudes.³³ Within the Order, there was a remarkable degree of discipline, upheld by a *Thāthanāboing* or Burmese Arch-Abbot. There was also a remarkable unanimity. Although there were different schools and parties, it is significant that there is little, if any, hint of doctrinal controversy. If there had been any considerable impact of Mahāyāna interpretation, we should surely have heard more about it. What, on the contrary, is much more evident, is the continued impact of Ceylon. Perhaps the most serious division was occasioned by a claim that it was necessary to resort to Ceylon to maintain the legitimate 'line of descent'.³⁴ There were, it is true, schismatics. Non-conformist Paramata sects decried the Order and taught the existence of an immanent Divine Being, the *Shwe Nyan Daw*, a belief which may reflect either Mahāyāna or Hindu influence. By and large, however the dominating religious and cultural force was Hinayāna Buddhism for eight centuries without interruption. We have therefore good reason for beginning a study of Southern Buddhism in a country which has been so deeply impressed by its influence.

There is also a personal reason. It was in Burma, some twenty years ago, that my own acquaintance with Buddhism began. It was during discussions with monks and laymen there that I began to think that Nirvana was the ultimate religious term of their faith — the term which symbolised the consummation of their doctrine, practice and aspiration. And the mode of expression of this Nirvana symbol seemed to me significant, not only for my Buddhist friends, but for all concerned with the study of religion and life.

³³ J. A. Stewart, "Note on Some Authorities for the History of Burma," *J.B.R.S.*, XIII (1923), p. 75.

³⁴ M. H. Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*, chap. II, p. 19.

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It is necessary, therefore, at the outset of our inquiry to correct this impression.

A writer on Comparative Religion is dependent on the experts from different fields, and Dr Bouquet is only repeating what a number of commentators on Burmese religion have been saying for the past fifty years. But if we examine their statements we find that many of them merely reflect, without further evidence or critical examination, an opinion expressed by a European official in a Census Report of 1891. This opinion was emphasised by another Census official, Mr. C. C. Lewis, ten years later:

"The Burman has added to his Animism just so much Buddhism as suits him and with infantile inconsequence draws solace from each in turn. I know of no better definition of the religion of the great bulk of the people ... than that given by Mr Eales in his 1891 Census Report, 'a thin veneer of philosophy laid over the main structure of Shamanistic belief.' The facts are here exactly expressed. Animism supplies the solid constituents that hold the faith together, Buddhism the superficial polish. Far be it from me to underrate the value of that philosophic veneer. It has done all that a polish can do to smooth, to beautify and to brighten, but to the end of time it will never be anything more than a polish. In the hour of great heart-searchings it is profitless as the Apostle's sounding brass. It is then that the Burman falls back upon his primaeval beliefs. Let but the veneer be scratched, the crude animism that lurks below must out. Let but his inmost vital depths be touched, the Burman stands forth an Animist confessed."⁴

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Mr Lewis' opinion is based on a critical examination of the situation, and it cannot be lightly gainsaid. He also refers to the prevailing Animistic beliefs of the surrounding hill tribes who still infiltrate into the plains of Burma, a factor which encourages the survival of primitive ideas among the Burmese themselves. This survival is not to be denied. It is impossible to live in Burma without coming across evidences of Animism, sooner or later — the coconut, surmounted by a red cloth, still hung in most Burmese households as a *Net* offering; the bus driver halting his vehicle to run across the road and place a little bouquet of flowers at the foot of some tree which is the shrine of a local spirit. Most of these practices are innocent. Occasionally, however, one has a grim reminder of more fateful beliefs. Burmese students once explained to me, reluctantly, that they had desisted in their efforts to save a drowning boy because it was obvious that he had been seized by the *Net* of the lake.

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⁴ *Census of India Report*, Vol. XII, (Burma, 1901), Part 1, by C. C. Lewis, chap. III, p. 25.

Animism in Burma is usually termed Nat-worship. Nat has been compared with the Indian, *Natka*, but it is probably an indigenous term.⁸ Strictly speaking, it should be distinguished from "disembodied spirit" or ghost, for which the Burmese name is *fas*. The Burmese also speak of the "butterfly" soul in man, the *leip-bya*, which may leave the body even in life, during dream or unconsciousness.⁹ "A nat is something quite different. The word is the equivalent of our word god, in the sense in which we speak of the gods of ancient Greece and Rome."¹⁰ Nat legends, however, express the belief that most, if not all, of these godlings were once human beings. Thus the familiar household Nat, Min Magayi, was once a blacksmith, Maung Tin Dè, a man of such prodigious strength that whenever he struck his anvil the whole city was shaken, to the great wrath of the king who caused the blacksmith's death. His spirit continued to vex the neighbourhood until a temple was built in his honour.¹¹ In later times such spirits seem to have been elevated to Nat status by royal decree. Burmese tradition emphasises the Thirty Seven Nats, but the number has no special significance. Many Nats not included in the thirty seven are recognised today and some of the thirty seven ignored. Any attempt to denote the Nat realm too narrowly misrepresents what is, in fact, a fluctuating and ill defined situation. 'All is change' applies to this realm, in Burmese estimation, as much as to any other. Nor can we point to any one origin of the cultus. The Mondaing Nat, for example, may reflect a primitive Nature worship, since Mondaing signifies whirlwind, but local legend suggests another origin.¹² Some of the Nats are associated with Brahmanic and Buddhist legend. Others are definitely local and even recent. Sir George Scott, who was an acute observer, said that the Burman always distinguished the Spirits of Nature from the legendary gods imported from India.¹³ On the other hand, there is a tendency to mingle Buddhist story and Nat story, and the Buddhist gets, as well as the *dees* is quite at home among the Burmese Nats.¹⁴

In earlier times, a victim was slain in order to provide a guardian spirit for a new town or building, and as late as the eleventh century a queen is said to have given her life for such a purpose. Buddhist teaching against taking life has gradually prevailed, however, against these harsher

⁸ Cf. Bigandet, *Life of Gaudama* Vol. I, p. 17, Vol. II, p. 334 and Temple, *The Thirty Seven Nats*, p. 8.

⁹ Cf. Forbes, *British Burma*, chap. IV, p. 99.

¹⁰ R. Grant Brown, *The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese*, p. 6.

¹¹ R. Grant Brown, *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹³ Temple, *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Cf. Binaka C. Law, *The Buddhist Conception of Spirits*.

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692 original and appellate jurisdiction. These officers were execu-
631 tive officers under the crown, but when they sat as judges in
their respective courts, they were judges in the full sense of the
term, for they were free of all executive control. Finally there
[643] was the Supreme Court. This final court of appeal consisted of
the king as the president, the crown prince as the vice-presi-
dent, the four chief ministers, and their four deputies. The
king, however, attended only on rare occasions, and thus the
crown prince usually presided over the court. The law that
these courts administered and interpreted was the customary
694 law of the Burmese people. One special feature of the courts
[693] was their attempt to settle the case before actually trying it.
Lawyers, who were attached to the courts as officers, although
their fees were payable by the litigants, also endeavored to
conciliate the contending parties. Often the parties decided to
refer their suit to an arbitrator. There was no right of appeal
from the decision of an arbitrator, on the ground that the
arbitrator was chosen by the contending parties themselves.
When a suit had been heard and decided, the successful party
offered a dish of pickled tea to the other party, and if the latter
accepted, the parties were deemed to have been reconciled,
and there could be no appeal from the decision of the court.
The refusal of the unsuccessful party to accept the offered dish
of pickled tea served as his notice of appeal.

691 Burmese history, like the history of many countries, re-
[178] cords rebellions, invasions, and violent struggles for power,
● 177 but the development of Burmese customary law has been
175 singularly free from catastrophes and sudden changes. There
has never been a revolution in the Burmese customary law.
However, the law in the course of its long history experienced
three great impacts with the outside world. The first was the
impact of Hindu jurisprudence, second was the impact of
Buddhism, and the third was the impact of English law as the
result of the British conquest of the country towards the end
of the nineteenth century.

Some of my colleagues of this conference have already

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spoken on the impact of Hindu thought and culture on the countries of Southeast Asia. The Hindu expansion overseas was well underway by the second and third centuries after Christ, and Hindu ideas and Hindu philosophies were beginning to remold the native patterns of belief and culture in Southeast Asia. In Burma, however, only the coastal region fell under Hindu influence. The Pyus by the fifth century had founded their kingdom of Prome, then situated only a few miles away from the sea, at the mouth of the Irrawaddy. The Mons, who belonged to the Mon-Khmer tribes that had settled in the regions now known as Thailand and Indo-China, had entered Lower Burma from the east, and their kingdom of Thaton, also then on the sea, seemed to have become powerful by the fifth century, about the same time as Prome. These two cities, Prome and Thaton, probably first became important as ports of call for Hindu merchant ships sailing between India and Malaya and Java, but even in those two kingdoms, Hindu influence was not strong. Thus Burma is the one country in Southeast Asia which was not Hinduized. By the eighth century after Christ, the Irrawaddy Delta was quickly forming, and Prome became farther away from the sea; the kingdom seemed to have declined rapidly, and the Pyus began to merge with the Burmese, who had now founded their kingdom at Pagan in Upper Burma. In the eleventh century, the Burmese made their kingdom strong enough to conquer and destroy the kingdom of Thaton. The Burmese were now supreme in the land.

But the conquest of Thaton opened the outer world beyond the seas to the Burmese. From the conquered Mons the Burmese became acquainted with Hindu literature and with Buddhist scriptures. Burmese society and Burmese law now experienced the double impact of Hinduism and Buddhism, but, of course, by that time, Hindu power in Southeast Asia was a spent force. Both Burmese society and Burmese law survived those two impacts.

Hindu jurisprudence and Hindu legal literature had

671 molded the native customary laws in the other regions of
177 Southeast Asia, and the great Hindu Code of Manu, the hermit,
the sage, the lawgiver, had gained enormous prestige and au-
thority in Southeast Asia. The Burmese scholars and lawyers
of the eleventh century studied the Code of Manu, but found
[565] little in it to interest them. The rigid caste system, which
served as the basis of Hindu law as embodied in the Code of
Manu, made no appeal to the Burmese with their classless
society. The Burmese never had an aristocracy or a middle
class. The king was above others, but others were all equal.
There was no hereditary nobility, and the Burmese have al-
ways been so individualistic that family names or surnames
have never existed with the Burmese. The officers of the king
could be said to have formed a nobility, but if that was so, it
was a nobility into which every Burmese could enter by talent
and personality alone. The king, the chieftain, and the head-
man were originally elected. Thus the idea of dividing society
into classes distinguished only by birth seemed strange to the
Burmese.

671 Nonetheless, the prestige of the Code of Manu was so high
773 in Southeast Asia that the Burmese decided to make Manu
their mythical law-giver. In Hindu mythology, Manu was a
hermit, divinely inspired. In Burmese legend, Manu became
a simple cowherd who was later elected king because of his
mastery of customary law. The Burmese Manu also became
a hermit later, but he became a hermit out of remorse be-
cause he once gave a wrong decision. This wrong judgment
of the great Manu is well known in Burmese folklore as the
case of the small cucumber. There was a cucumber plant
growing in a man's garden, but as it was a creeper, it grew
across the dividing hedge and bore fruit in the neighbor's
garden. Now the man and the neighbor quarreled as to who
was entitled to the small cucumber fruit, and they took their
case before the great Manu, who decided in favor of the neigh-
bor. But he soon reversed his decision, and feeling remorseful
over his previous judgment, became a hermit. This clearly

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illustrates that with the Burmese, Manu had become only an ordinary human being with the human trait of making mistakes, so very different from the divine hermit of Hindu lore.

By the thirteenth century, the customary law of the Burmese came to be collected and written down by jurists and scholars. Throughout the intervening centuries until the British conquest of the country, such collections of the law, and also collections of judicial precedents were made from time to time by scholars and jurists. But those collections were not codes, and were not fully binding on the judges. In all these collections, Manu was mentioned as the law-giver, and this lip-service paid to the prestige of the Hindu Code of Manu has misled modern scholars, especially European scholars of Burmese history and Burmese law, into thinking that the Burmese law was merely the Hindu Code of Manu modified and transplanted almost overnight in Burma of the eleventh century.

But in the eleventh century, the Burmese did become Buddhists almost overnight. The Burmese took to Buddhism with great enthusiasm, because the way of life preached by the Buddha seemed to be identical with their own democratic way of life. The Buddhistic revolt against the rigid caste system of the Hindu society could be appreciated by the Burmese, who called the Hindu half-playfully and half-seriously, "kula" or "caste people," and the Buddhistic emphasis on the equality of all men appealed to the Burmese with their classless society and their own emphasis on individual freedom. The jurists and the scholars waxed enthusiastic over Buddhism, and they gave a Buddhistic coloring and a Buddhistic background to their collections of Burmese customary law. This misled the early British administrators and judges in Burma into thinking that Burmese customary law was Buddhistic in origin, and gave to it the misleading official name of "Burmese Buddhist Law."

The impact of the English legal system introduced into

210 SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE COMING WORLD

671 The impact of the English legal system introduced into
177 the country after the annexation of 1886 shook Burmese cus-
178 tomary law to its very foundations, just as Burmese society
itself rocked with the shock of the impact. But Burmese so-
ciety soon regained its balance, and so did Burmese customary
law. The British, by statute, superseded the Burmese cus-
tomary law of contract and tort with their own English com-
mon law, but recognized the Burmese customary law regard-
ing marriage and divorce, adoption, inheritance, and religious
usage, and these branches of the customary law remain valid
today. Thus, whereas in India the legislature now struggles
against strong public opposition to pass new statutes intro-
ducing changes in the Hindu law of marriage and inheritance
so as to adjust Hindu law to new developments in Hindu so-
ciety, the Burmese, after their hard-won independence, have
not found it necessary to modify by statute or to codify their
customary law. With regard to the English law of contract
and tort that was introduced into the country after the British
annexation, the Burmese did not find the new law strange
and mysterious, for the fundamental principles of Burmese
law of contract and tort had certain similarities with the funda-
mental principles of English common law. Thus the principles
of specific performance, of damages, of a period of limitation,
and a remoteness of damage were known to the Burmese law
also. Even the English legal plea of "Act of God" for exemp-
tion from liability has its Burmese counterpart in the plea of
"ill fortune." The following rules of law relating to ferries
will illustrate this aspect of Burmese law:

675 If a man, for the sake of hire, becomes a ferryman, let him fol-
671 low these rules. He shall carefully consider and take only the cor-
672 rect fare. If he is careless, or jocular, or immodest, and as a result,
property of a passenger is spilled or damaged, let him make good
the loss to the owner. But if he crosses with proper care and proper
behaviour, and property be lost or damaged, let him blame ill
fortune, and he shall not be liable. Women with child, monks, and
sick persons shall be ferried across, even if they have no money to
pay as fare.

BURMESE KINSHIP AND THE LIFE CYCLE: AN OUTLINE

CHARLES S. BRANT AND MI MI KHAING¹

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

121 OUR PURPOSE is to present and analyze some basic features of Burmese social organization. So numerous, elaborate and varied are the details of belief and behavior pertaining to kinship and the life cycle that to present them in a manner approximating completeness would be beyond the scope of a brief paper.

121 The material that follows, concerning the kinship system, patterns of customary behavior between various pairs of relatives, and the life cycle, is to be understood as applying to contemporary Burmese culture as it is manifested in the villages of Lower Burma. In and near the urban centers, where the secularizing influences of the West have permeated indigenous custom to a greater extent, practice is likely to diverge from ideal patterns much more than in the small, homogeneous village communities. Our concern here is with the social life of the ordinary peasantry of Lower Burma. It is hoped that these data may contribute in some measure to the very scant and fragmentary knowledge of modern Burmese culture.²

THE KINSHIP SYSTEM

601 The basic consanguineal and affinal kinship terminologies are shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3. The kinship terms, corresponding to the numbers shown on the diagrams, are as follows:³

1. ?améi Mother.
2. ?aphéi Father.
3. pharji Parent's elder brother; parent's elder sister's husband.

[122] 1 The first-named author of this paper expresses his thanks to the Board of Foreign Scholarships for appointment to a scholarship under the Fulbright Program, making possible the field research period 1949-50 in Burma, and to the Social Science Research Council for supplementary support in the form of a World Area Research Training fellowship.

2 The interested reader is referred to Shway Yoe's *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, first published in 1882 and most recently reprinted by Macmillan & Co., London, for the only fully-rounded account of Burmese culture. See also Mi Mi Khaing, *Burmese Family* (London, 1946) for a culturally insightful narrative of life in a Burmese family.

3 For assistance in transcription of the kinship terms thanks are due Professor W. S. Cornyn. The symbols follow the system employed in his *Outline of Burmese Grammar* (Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America, 1944).

593 husband's kinfolk. Post-marital residence is independent and is decided very
 [591] largely on the basis of economic opportunity. The wife's opportunities for social
 intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence
 is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages
 marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the
 [574] chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by
 [582] visits from time to time; such marriages seldom unite persons from villages that
 are very far apart. The very structural features of bilaterality and absence of
 extension militate against inequality and male domination.

562 Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in con-
 593 trast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes
 seems to be the resultant historically of two patterns of thought. One is an ap-
 parently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheri-
 [428] tance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of
 [586] property upon divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and
 an absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from
 the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese conceptions: whatever
 [177] ideas of male superiority exist in Burmese life stem from Buddhist notions of
 [775] reincarnation. Although Buddha never expressed himself explicitly on the matter,
 it is taken for granted that only a male can attain Nirvana, since Gautama
 Buddha, who attained that state, was a male.

462 In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as
 592 the preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and
 clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the fam-
 ily income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

593 Certain observances and taboos, reflective of deference to males, are expected
 784 of the female partner in marriage. She is careful that her lower garments do not
 touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her hus-
 band's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the hus-
 band's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions
 are followed as a matter of course by Burmese wives and will be broken deliber-
 ately only as an act of spite by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband
 for some reason.

593 Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is
 837 a tendency towards a double standard of sexual behavior. A husband who has
 reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely
 [586] to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a

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lecturer went to the head of the grave and said in English: "So-and-so, I give you notice that you are no longer in the Jr. B. A. class." When U Tin Gyi died during an official visit to England, we held his cremation at Golders Green and succeeded in getting a Singhalese hpongyi from the Buddhist Lodge in London to perform the rites. In spite of the environment of the crematorium we felt that we had achieved a dim and religious Buddhist atmosphere, such as he would have wished, by the time the hpongyi had intoned the verses, with all the gathered Burmese students repeating them phrase by phrase. But suddenly one of the English officers present got up and read in English: "U Tin Gyi, O.B.E., Registrar for Co-operative Societies in the Government of Burma, I give you leave to relinquish your post in the service of the Government. Signed—Adams." As if the persistent ghost might return to haunt in English, having been dismissed in only one of his two languages.)

Mr. Bernard Swithinbank of the I.C.S. had, through long years of friendship for Burmese people, laid the hands of many young couples one upon the other in marriage, and in this case he seemed particularly fitted for the task, for twenty-five years before he had married the parents of the bride, and though he could not perform for the bridegroom's parents their marriage ceremony which was held in Grandfather's time, it was he who gave my father leave to go to Thaton, as senior officer wishing him all prosperity in his marriage.

At last the great day arrived and all the male cousins and uncles collected at our house to dress the bridegroom with as much fuss as attends a bride in any other country. My mother had bought three pink silk turbans varying barely perceptibly in shade, so that the young man's complexion might be matched exactly when the fateful hour approached. My two young sisters and I took one each and sewed the finest possible seams, but submitting every inch as we went long to the scrutiny of my senior uncle Kyaw Din who said that a man's turban needed finer sewing than any woman's garment. My *Ko Lay*, most debonair of the cousins, tied the turban on my brother's head, while the band of elder brothers-once-removed stood around and complained that he did not make the floating end dance and toss with sufficient sprightliness. Two uncles and two cousins combined to tie his pasoe, the magnificent skirt which had been brought down from Mandalay and matched in the weaving with the bride's own skirt. My brother submitted to all of this with a meekness born of never having worn full Burmese dress before. All the while my three sisters danced around to look at him from every angle, exclaiming with sauciness and delight how beautiful and pink he looked, for my brother was really a robust and dark-skinned type of man who liked to wear sober English clothes.

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276 them down. She stopped the base with one of the *a-ni-hkan* and stuck the leaf over it. This provided a firm grip for the mouth, and the same *a-ni-hkan* could be used again and again. What we loved best about this was that my aunt never used matches but, even when we were little children, she would hand us a cheroot with which we ran to the kitchen. There the cook would pull out a piece of firewood and hold the gigantic flaming match while we puffed the cheroot alight and brought it back to my aunt.

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177.
30 Kyi-Kyi's daily toilet was another thing we loved to watch, and even when I was grown up I never ceased to admire its simple thoroughness. She has never altered it since she was a young girl forty-five years ago, neither conceding to newer fashions nor omitting any of the vanities as she grew from girlhood into middle-age. She came out of her bath with her longyi *yin-sha* that is, drawn up above her bosom. She then put thanakha on face, neck and shoulders; face powder she condemned as having lead in it, but baby's talcum powder she sprayed on her palms, rubbed them together and patted into her face as the thanakha was drying. Then she moistened a brush the size of a baby toothbrush, and rubbed the thanakha off her eyebrows and lashes and traced her hairline in an exaggerated rectangle to produce what was considered a noble and beautiful forehead, a *mahanahpu*. By this time the thanakha and powder were dry, and uneven patches were rubbed off with a dry brush. Then she opened a little jar—always an empty Tiger Balm bottle—in which was a mixture of oil and blacking. She dipped a special brush into this and drew her eyebrows and the rectangular hairline. She cleaned her lips and ear-studs with water, and then put sandalwood or other ground bark on her arms and legs. Her hair had been dressed before she had her bath, in a *sadone*. This is the coil of hair built up in a cylindrical form around a framework of combs and hairpins, helped out by false tresses. It is the universal hair style for all women after they pass the age of about seventeen, and ladies like my aunt never go anywhere unless their hair is formally dressed in this way.

In modern times, however, the younger women have not only streamlined the *sadone*, making it thinner and taller, but they have shelved it as a full-dress style, to be worn only on special occasions, while every day they go about with the hair drawn straight back and twisted over a comb at the back of the head. Although the *sadone* is worn by both older and younger ladies, differentiating touches are carried out. Young unmarried girls fix a *sameik* on the right side of the *sadone*. This is a short tress, the head of which is anchored hidden inside the cylinder, but which comes over the top and leaves its free end to dangle coquettishly at the side. The modern girls exaggerate the coquetry of

the sameik by using an uncoiled dry and slightly wavy tress to offer, a wanton contrast to the smooth severe cylinder. In the absence of permanent waving, and with the straightness of the Burmese hair, I admired the enterprise of a Rangoon family who subsidized, with supplies of coconut oil, the Indian gardener next door, an Oriya coming from a race with wavy raven locks, until his tresses grew to the requisite length and they bought them for binding into a sameik. This sameik is discarded after marriage, but in the case of a girl who does not get married early, it continues in a more restrained form, a *sameik-kuin*, when it is tucked back into the bottom of the cylinder to form a loop. Shortly after the age of twenty-five, she discards it altogether and makes just a sadone like a married woman. Kyi-Kyi's sadone was broad and low; after she had finished the rest of her toilet she tied her hair by drawing a thread backwards from her forehead so that stray hairs were tucked into the sadone, and the same with the upswept hair at the back. She also carried the Burmese powder puff in her luggage though I never saw her use it. These, which we also still use as the best means of applying Max Factor powder, were scraps of old cotton vests, about ten inches square, which had been soaked and washed in thanakha, thus avoiding the horrible newness of the unused modern powder puff.

My aunt's clothes were also aggressively her own. This was noticeable especially with her going-out clothes, for which she would never have any imported materials. She declared that imported silks, crêpe-de-chines and the like, could not be washed and beaten clean like the Burmese silks and cottons. Neither did they produce suitable colours and designs for elderly spinster ladies like her—they were either gay and skittish, or of a soberness that depressed without pleasing one. What she loved most were the *ya-khaing* longyis, silks and cottons woven in Arakan, in small check patterns, but so stout that you soaked them and beat them hard before the first wearing, and then washed them again and again until you had a pliant closely-woven fabric whose colour and freshness lasted a lifetime. One of my sisters, whom my aunt pressed to wear a *ya-khaing* longyi in preference to a crêpe-de-chine piece whose bright butterflies had appealed to her sixteen-year-old fancy, stated that no doubt if she slept in the *ya-khaing* longyi every night for seven years, it would just be at its best for her to wear when she reached the age of twenty-five. For more dressy occasions, my aunt wore *zin-mè* silks, the design of which was reputed to come from Chiangmai in Siam, and in imitation of which Burmese weavers now produce *zin-mè* longyis in dull red and green geometrical designs, like old lacquer colours. Kyi-Kyi sometimes wore *Bangkaik* longyis also, said to come truly from Bangkok, but more often woven in Burma in imitation of the characteristic twist

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584 family made it necessary to arrange things in a traditional manner. My brother had chosen his bride from a family of sisters who had been to school with us and with whom we were on the friendliest terms, so that he could have pressed his own suit if he wished, but since my sister-in-law's family also stood for tradition, we had to go through elaborate negotiations.

For a go-between we chose a lady who belonged to high circles of Rangoon society and who was known to be a great friend of the girl's family. One morning my mother and I paid her a formal call and made the proposal. my mother reciting the list of her son's qualifications which the lady already knew quite well. She promised to approach the guardian aunt of the girl's family. Shortly after this, we called on the aunt, who demurred, not to seem eager, and said, moreover, that she could not give an answer until she had consulted an astrologer to see whether the stars of the young man and woman formed an auspicious union. We thereupon gave her the date and hour of my brother's birth. During all this time, no word had passed between my future sister-in-law and us upon the matter; we did not, in fact, visit her. In due course, the aunt gave her answer, and while my brother was out of town on a tour, a party was held at the girl's house, with the senior relatives of both sides present to formalize the engagement. No unmarried young girls should attend this, out of modesty, and although I went along as my mother's right-hand, I had to closet myself in the bedroom with the girls. It was only then, when the elders were formalizing the engagement, that my sister-in-law did not feel it forward to talk about the wedding and future happiness with much excitement. After the engagement had been announced, my brother was allowed to call every day during the three months of their engagement, but they were not allowed to be seen together in public.

• 177. Meanwhile, great preparations went on, for besides the social arrangements attendant on all weddings, the attire of the bride and bridegroom had to be matched in colour, a panegyric writer had to be found to write the poem of praise, and suitable elders to perform the ceremony had to be agreed upon. The modern Burmese custom is to ask the most respected highly placed Burmese couple among the family's friends, along with an equally respected English official to pronounce recognition in English. (This learning of English by a vast number of Burmans, and their daily activities in that language, have led to much duplication of effort in the disposal of their spirits also. When a person is buried, a notice is served on his spirit that this body is now to be vacated, and the spirit to go elsewhere for fear that the faithful spirit hovering round the grave may create a ta-say, a ghost. When a student died in term time at the University, the rites at her funeral were completed only when a

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The abundance of land allows every one to have a courtyard of his own. In this the farmer keeps his cart and plough, the fisherman his boat. The buffaloes and oxen of the whole village are usually all together on a pasture-ground kept by some speculative individual, who charges a couple of rupees or so for feeding and looking after them. The care exercised is not very great. Heat and rain kill many of them, where, as is too frequently the case, no shelter is available; foot-and-mouth disease, and other epidemics, carry off great numbers, and finally, they are not at all averse to killing one another. Consequently the vultures are frequently to be seen on the trees round the village pasture-land. Besides his implements the house-owner has always in his yard a hand rice-mill. Husking paddy has become, near the big towns, quite a separate trade, and abundance of cleaned rice may be bought in the bazaars, but in the village every family husks its own rice, the grain being kept stored in a small granary in the yard. The milling is done by the women, and there are two processes in the operation. The mill consists of two wooden cylinders about two feet thick, the inner surfaces of both roughened in a simple way by the cutting of radii from their centres, the lines being about a quarter of an inch deep. The upper cylinder has a funnel-shaped hole cut through it, to let the grain down, and is worked backwards and forwards by a long pole loosely fastened in, the rice coming out between the two cylinders, and falling on mats down below. It is winnowed either in the primitive way of throwing it into the air, so that the light husk may be blown away, or, often nowadays in Lower Burma, by a hand-worked pair of fanners, introduced since the English occupation.

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The rice is not yet, however, ready for cooking. The inner pellicle has still to be removed, and this is done in a big wooden mortar. Two varieties are in use, worked either by hand, as an apothecary pounds his drugs, the pestle being very long and heavy; or by foot, when the wooden mortar is sunk in the ground. The pestle in this latter case consists of a short, stumpy piece of wood, let into a long lever near the end. This lever is supported on two uprights at some distance from the mortar, and the machine is worked by the

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addition to this a mi-kat stands beside it. This is a broad griddle, or flapper kind of thing, and its object is to beat out the flame which may be caused by a spark lighting on the roof. In addition to this, in many parts of the country, pots full of water are always kept in readiness on the tops of the houses, so that when the hour of danger comes, the householder may douse his roof, and so do the best for himself. In Mandalay, under native rule, some of the pa-gwets, and other outcasts, patrolled the streets all night, to watch for and prevent fires as much as possible.

Another kind of roofing is wā-kat, a sort of flat tile-like construction, six feet long by two feet broad, made of coarse bamboo matting. Bamboos split in half down the centre, and with the knots smoothed away, are also used. They are placed close together, with the hollow side upwards, extending all the way down from the ridge to the eaves, and over these again are placed others with the rounded side up, the whole presenting rather a curious appearance, but making a very serviceable roof and not nearly so dangerous as the leaf or grass thatching. The leaves of other trees are also occasionally used, but the simplicity and cheapness of the dani roof make it by far the most prevalent in the delta, as grass is elsewhere, notwithstanding its danger. In Rangoon and Maulmein, shingles, that is, small wooden slabs like slates, are being very generally introduced.

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In the better class of houses the floors are made of planking, but poorer people have nothing better than a series of whole or split bamboos laid side by side on the cross-beams and tied down with rattans. This is not very pleasant to walk on, and has the further disadvantage of being anything but cleanly, for the spaces between the bamboos offer an irresistible temptation to drop all litter and garbage on to the ground immediately underneath the house, and were it not for the pariah dogs the sanitary condition of the place would soon be very bad.

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The house is thus simple enough in its character, but the furniture is still more so. Intercourse with the English has indeed brought many Burmans to indulge in English luxuries, and in many houses in Rangoon and the larger district towns, chandeliers, bookcases, pictures, and even

statuary are to be seen, besides abundance of chairs and tables, and occasionally bedsteads, while clocks, kerosine lamps, looking-glasses, and lounge chairs are universal. But it is very different in the village houses. There is practically no furniture at all there, for a chair is of no use to a jungle Burman, and without chairs tables are equally useless. Consequently all that is to be seen in a village house is the goodman's box, and a few woven mats and hard bamboo pillows to sleep on. Cots are not used, for one of the Ten Precepts, to be kept on duty-days, is that one must not sleep on a high place. The only furnishings visible are the mats rolled up during the day with the rugs or blankets which serve for bedding. The mats themselves are probably home-made, manufactured from fine strips of bamboo, the best being those with the polished silicious surface outside, which stand any amount of work. Softer, finer articles are made from the skin of the theng, a species of rush, which takes a black dye, and is often worked into patterns, but no one has anything more elaborate, and indeed nothing better could be wished for. A cooler bed could not easily be found. In the country, also, the cooking place during the rains is in the house. During the fine weather culinary operations are carried on in the open air, behind the premises. The cooking range is nothing more than a box, two or three feet square, and six inches deep, filled up with earth or ashes, and on the top of this the wood used as fuel is piled. The cooking utensils and the dining service are equally simple. The former consists of nothing further than two or three earthen pots with lids to them, and a wooden spurtle to stir the contents with. Close at hand is a jar full of water, with a ladle—half a cocoa-nut with a handle through it. These are all the kitchen appliances. In place of table there is a huge round dish of lacquered wood, called a byat. These byats are sometimes as much as three feet and more in diameter, and on them is heaped up in a gigantic pile the rice, while the curry is served in little bowls disposed round about. A young couple have, therefore, no ruinous expenses when they set up house. The inventory of effects necessarily is soon made.

Outside the house there is not much more to notice.

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yet with Burma itself. Brought up as a complacent child of a government officer in Burma, this was the first time that I realized how we had unconsciously thought of England, the British Empire, as a permanent world force during our lifetime—a force with which we might bargain advantageously or without success, but one that our fathers and we had taken for granted for all the time that we could remember. But now we realized it as one power—leading perhaps—amongst other powers in the West, and we realized also the existence of Japan and remembered how the Burmans who visited it always brought back stories of the beauty, progress and good manners of the country.

We left our English friends in the first half of August 1940, as they waited, braced for an invasion, to go to what they and we considered a war-free country. I was in the Ladies Room of a big restaurant in London just before I left, when the attendant who watched me wrap my longyi asked me which country I came from. "Burma," I told her. "Burma," she repeated uncertainly. "Is there a war there, Miss?" "No," I said laughing, "but there is a Road there." Yet I was only amusing myself. As we set out home, the furthest that our thoughts of war and Burma ranged, was to wonder whether the Burma Road and the recent closing of it had made people think more about Japan and China than they had done in 1937, when the outbreak of war between the two countries had caused little excitement except that some of my friends became consistent boycotters of Japanese goods. We also wondered vaguely whether trade had been affected, and whether thought and general social conditions had been stimulated with the world-shattering event of a European war, not dreaming that this was but the splash of a pebble compared to the tempest that was to follow.

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Since I had left Burma, my mother and brother and sisters had settled themselves in Rangoon and I wondered how the city would seem after the big cities of the West. Rangoon is not one of the ancient cities of Burma. Its present position in the life of the country and people is a complete turnabout from its traditional place, for in days gone by it had attracted the inhabitants through spiritual rather than material renown. While Pagan, Ava, Toungoo and Mandalay rose and fell in political and commercial importance, Rangoon—Dagon as it was called—continued unchangingly a seat of pilgrimage, connected with fable and divinity, forming an actual link with another world cycle that existed in the universe before this present arrangement of Mount Myinmo, with its surrounding heavenly, earthly and hellish regions, was formed.

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For it was on the hill called Theinguttara, which now casts its shadow on the city of Rangoon with its crown of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, that the omens for the spiritual life of this world cycle were manifested, before

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the last world was dissolved in chaos. On this hill five lotus buds sprang out of the earth; they opened into blossom, and from each flew a sacred bird which bore a sacred yellow robe towards the heavens. These five robes presaged the coming of five Buddhas who would guide the future world along the noble path to Nirvana. After this sign, that former world was destroyed; the present world followed, and the Buddhas appeared as foretold: Kaukathan, Gaunagong, Kathapa and Gautama, who successively attained enlightenment in this world, and whose statues now sit, each fifty feet tall and twenty feet broad, back to back in a great quadrate at the Kyaikpun Pagoda, calm and majestic as the grass grows about them and the rain washes down on their faces, awaiting the arrival of the fifth and last Buddha, after which this world cycle will be destroyed in a universal chaos. As each Buddha saw his enlightenment in this world he left a relic at the Theinguttara Hill, which had foretold his coming and which would now mark his attainment of wisdom—Kaukathan his staff, Gaunagon his water filter, Kathapa a portion of his robe, and Gautama his eight hairs which were enshrined in the first Shwe Dagon Pagoda after many perilous journeys.

But now the importance of Rangoon banishes all that into the realm of our dreams. The beginnings of trade date from about 1760 after King Alaungpaya had won a battle here and called the place *Yangon*: end of strife; but the big foreign port sprang up suddenly after 1852 when the British gained possession of it; the ships coming into its harbour from the oceans grew larger and larger, buildings followed the expanding commerce, roads and railways were built to all parts of Burma, foreigners crowded in and stamped its character, and by 1941 Rangoon had become a cosmopolitan city of over 500,000 inhabitants, more than three times larger than the next largest city in Burma and controlling over 80% of its export trade.

If the Burmese Empire of former days had been a sea-power, the development of Rangoon would not have been left to this late day, for its position makes it the obvious port for the whole country, and it had many natural beauties which would have made it a fair metropolis. Twenty-one miles up from the open sea, the Rangoon River gives a broad sweep to the left and allows a frontage of over two miles for ocean shipping to anchor. The river is a continuation of the Hlaing River flowing southwards from about 50 miles north of Rangoon and this, with the Pegu River and the Pazundaung Creek which join its waters opposite Rangoon from the right, made inland water transport also easy. The land giving on to the Rangoon River was open and flat for the layout of a fine city, with, further in, lakes and wooded hillocks, but just north of Rangoon the range of hills known as the Pegu Yomas stretched northwards for

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voice, "Do you understand the hpongyi's language after being so long as it were one human amongst a thousand monkeys?" 192
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Chastened and fortified by such injunctions, I was ready to plunge into six months of social life before starting on the serious business of earning a living. Rangoon should have offered plenty of scope for that, according to the rhyme about the first three cities of Burma: "*Moul-a-myaing a-sa, Mandalay sa-ga, Yangon a-kywa* : Moulmein for rich eating, Mandalay for fine speaking, Rangoon for showy vanity." 361
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The Yangon-thu were grouped in urban or verdant clusters about the city of foreigners. There were two packed streets of the more prosperous trading classes in a western quarter of Rangoon, which the municipal authorities called Edward Street and Oliphant Street, but which to every Burman had always been known as *Kon-zay Dan* : Goods Bazaar Row, and *Shwedaung Dan* : Gold Mountain Row. Here the families lived in tightly packed unpretentious houses and did not possess Western style furniture or cars ; they went to the cinema in rickshaws, but the women were loaded with valuable diamond jewellery which put many a minkadaw to shame. In the dusk of the evenings, they sat on wooden platform couches on the pavement outside each house, puffing at cheroots, calling out to neighbours and eating a variety of choice foods from the Burmese, Chinese and Indian restaurant quarter which surrounded them. In the east of the town, separated from this area by rows of Indian and mixed streets, retired Government officers were concentrated in a block. Here the houses were substantial, the sons and daughters attended school and University in cars, and the most eligible civil servants could be obtained in marriage for daughters, but the pensioners were the type who lived in a congested neighbourhood for fear of dacoits in a more open area, and whose womenfolk considered lawns and the drawing-rooms of modern bungalows a poor substitute for the access to cinema, eating houses and bazaars that a crowded part of Rangoon afforded them. Round about the Kokine Lakes and along the main highway to Prome, however, more newly retired Burmans who entertained on chairs, laid rugs on floors and hung pictures on walls in the Western fashion, had built pleasant modern bungalows. To the west of this area, just a stone's throw from the main Prome Road, began the village of Kemmendine with its rows of small wooden houses, each with its front enclosure full of green foliage, an altar-stand jutting out on the east wall, three steps raising the first and only storey a few feet off the ground, and wooden floors with one plank loose in them to allow the dust to be swept below. Kemmendine had its own bazaar, country boats on the river, and children and dogs playing on the street, just like any district town. My *Ko Gyi*, eldest male first cousin, lived there among small traders, clerks and school

361 teachers. There were similar colonies of Burmese in the eastern parts
 177. of Rangoon—Yegyaw, Bahan, Tamwe and Pazundaung—but none so
 36 pleasant as Kemmendine.

361 When we were young, my mother's stock of household goods bought
 438 from their places of manufacture had shown us all the small industries
 563 of Burma. Now my sisters appeared to be as determined to do my
 Rangoon shopping from the most orthodox sources, and I learnt that to
 fit me out with a new set of Burmese clothes required the services and the
 varied talents of all communities of the cosmopolitan city. Imported
 silks, which were bought for longyis in addition to native silks, were the
 monopoly of merchants from Sind and Bikaner—houses of Ramchandra,
 Tejumar, Lekraj and others—who had set up windows in the modern Scott
 Market of Rangoon, and whose salesmanship had flowered in Burma into
 something vastly different from the nonchalance which they display in
 their native land. They offered cigarettes to casual buyers who fingered
 the usual run of silks, supplemented them with sweet coloured drinks
 from the sherbet stall behind the shops when they went on to more
 expensive satins, and if they ventured further into fine brocades and laces,
 dishes of ice-cream appeared as they waited for the material to be cut and
 measured.

Cotton longyis for day and night wear in the house took us to the
 western Burmese quarter of Rangoon. Here, in Goods Bazaar Row, the
 family firm of *U Hsin-Daw Htay*: husband and wife married in business,
 lived in the upper floor of their house, and stacked the lower floor with
 hundreds of cotton prints, made in Japan but manufactured with such
 an eye to Burmese requirements as regards texture, colours, design and
 width, that these *tha-yet-hte* longyis, as they were called, seemed to
 most people as Burmese as Bassein umbrellas or Mandalay slippers.
 All over Burma the women wore these longyis. The transplanters of
 the paddy, the young servant maids in a-so-ya mins' houses, the girls in
 Ye and a thousand other villages, women in bazaars and minkadaws
 themselves, all wore various qualities of bright *tha-yet-hte* prints bought
 for 10 annas to Re. 1/4 a longyi length of 1½ yards. *U Hsin* and *Daw
 Htay* were prosperous; we bought our longyis from them through snob-
 bery, in lots of ten, sitting barefooted on their mat-covered floor, with
 betel box in front of us, but it was possible to buy *tha-yet-hte* from
 the stalls of young Burmese women all along the big Soortee Bazaar
 and the Scott Market of the Town. These young women form one of
 Burma's fairest sights.

361 In the days of my schooling, when each new term plunged me into
 437 the foreign world behind Convent walls, as my mother completed the
 shopping for it on the last day of each vacation, I gazed back with longing

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announced massacres caused in England, and the whole thing was countermanded and denied. But upwards of a hundred people had been arrested, and some of these, when liberated months afterwards, declared that in the dark nights of terror, when no one ventured about Mandalay streets, people were buried under each of the posts at the twelve gates, as a compromise between the fear of the spirits and the fear that the English troops would cross the frontier. Each of these posts bears an image of an animal from one of the seals of the king, and before the post sits a figure of a bilu, with a thick club, to act as watchman, in case the human guard should go to sleep. As Burman sentries generally sleep sounder than other people, the propitiation of these spirits at any rate was a very imperative precaution. Whether the oil-jars were filled and reburied *alone* is a dark mystery. But the smallpox left Mandalay, and the place is as happy as ever it was, which, however, is not saying much.

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The British town of Mandalay is very different from that described. The Palace stockade has gone, and with it very many of the suites of apartments, notably in the women's quarter. The Hall of Audience for a time was converted into a Tamil Mission chapel; the Hlutdaw into a hideous collection of clerks' offices. This has been changed owing to the indignant protests of English visitors. Most of the Palace Halls are now empty: even the Upper Burma Club has been turned out.

The old City has now become cantonments with a few scattered barracks, officers' quarters, and wide stretches of grass. What formerly constituted the suburbs is now Mandalay town. The former execrable roads are now among the best in Burma. But many of the notable buildings, the elaborate monasteries, and gilt shrines have been burnt. Mandalay is certainly a dwindling town; the only question is how long it will remain the second town in Burma.

CHAPTER LVIII

MANDALAY AND RANGOON

[This chapter describes these towns as they were in 1881.]

AMERICANS talk, and with good reason, of the magic growth of their cities. But for mere mushroom growth, Mandalay might compare even with Chicago itself, and if we are to judge of the progress of a commercial place by the fair criterion of business results, Rangoon may hold up its head in confident rivalry with any of the typical American cities. In the middle of last century the site of Mandalay was swampy paddy land and rank jungle. Now an area of five square miles is covered with houses, many of them squalid enough certainly, and with large patches of unused land round about them, but none the less contained within the city limits. Rangoon came into British hands in 1852, and at that time possessed no commerce worthy of the name, indeed it was only known as the place for pilgrims to the Shwe Dagon pagoda to stay at, and the residence of the Regent of Pegu, as being the guard station on the most accessible mouth of the Irrawaddy. Ten years later, ships entered or cleared from the port having a tonnage of 295,000 tons, and the imports were worth £1,200,000, the exports £1,400,000, and since that date—a year or two after Mandalay had been founded—the tonnage has increased to 1,000,000, the value of the imports to £5,000,000 sterling, and the exports to £4,000,000. In a quarter of a century the commerce of British Burma rose to nearly £20,000,000 sterling. The population has quadrupled; public works are carried on; education is widely disseminated; the administration is carefully managed by British officials; a railway,

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361 There are Chinese, Japanese, Malays, Siamese, natives of
563 India of all parts, Bengalis, Madrassis, Panjabis, Parsis, Persians, Suratis, together with Armenians, Jews, English, French, Germans, Italians, Greeks, and all the European nationalities, mixed up with the native races, Burmese, Talaings, Shans, Karens, but they are all kept in order by the strong arm of the law, which is the same for the rich man and the poor.

361 The same benefits are now extended to Mandalay, but
● 177.36 it is a vastly less interesting place than it used to be. A siding from the railway cuts its way through the city wall; one of the pythats on the battlements has thrown out corridors to make a somewhat barrack-like Government house; a carriage drive goes round Mandalay hill; the pigs have all been eaten up, and the pariah dogs are poisoned periodically by municipal order. There never were any sludgy sqwudgy creeks, but the roads, which were a passable imitation of them in the rains, are now eminently fitted for exceeding the speed limit. A, B, and C roads testify to the unromantic stolidity of the Military Intelligence Department; electric trams make it easier for the Burman to move to the suburbs and leave the town to the hustling foreigner. There are no agreeable scallywags. There are Cook's tourists instead during the three cool months of the year. The palace, instead of being tawdrily magnificent, smells horribly of bats. It has been declared to be an archaeological treasure, though it is only about sixty years old, and has been horribly mishandled by unimaginative secretaries and a Public Works Department oppressed with sealed patterns.

humiliation. As an instance of Burman carelessness in money matters it may be mentioned that when the final instalment was paid, considerably over the sum due was sent to Calcutta. When the overplus was returned, there was great discussion among the Ministers as to what could be the motive of the Indian Government in being so singularly scrupulous.

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A good many districts were almost entirely exempted from taxes in recognition of special services required of them. The inhabitants of the capital were particularly well off in this respect. They furnished the troops to guard the palace and city. Moreover, it would have been much more difficult to oppress them with impunity, apart from the fact that if they were disaffected it would have offered a premium to rebels. For similar reasons some of the townships about Môtshobo were free from the ngwedaw. It was from this district that Alaungpaya, the founder of the dynasty, came, and insurrectionist princes always made for Môtshobo when they levied war. Several villages on the Irrawaddy, in consideration of supplying the royal gilded boats, manning the royal barges, and passing on Court despatches, were relieved from the family tax. But the petty officials took very good care that they did not grow rich on their immunities.

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All these methods were more or less sanctioned by ancient custom. Modern ingenuity and requirements, however, found out new ways of raising money. The pious ardour of Mindôn led him to spend vast sums on the erection of pagodas and religious buildings of all kinds, as well as on the manufactories, cotton mills, foundries, and powder mills with which he crowded the suburbs of Mandalay, and closed when he got tired of them. All this cost a very great deal of money, which even the exaction of benevolences from wealthy courtiers failed to supply. Consequently Mindôn Min turned merchant and established a great number of royal monopolies. The producers were allowed to sell to none but to him, and he fixed the price which he was prepared to pay. For long, cotton, jaggery, timber, wheat, precious stones, and earth oil could only be had from the royal merchant, and the trade with British Burma was in anything but a satisfactory state. Then in 1867, Colonel

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423 distinctions are more minute than is at all necessary or indeed
 428 comprehensible. They include all children born out of wed-
 848 lock, among whom are reckoned such as are born before the
 [577] parents have been married ten months; all children that are
 purchased, or adopted by any other ceremony than that of
 423 abadita or keiktima; and such as "from respect or affection
 184 style their guardians father or mother." The settlement of
 boundary marks was one of the earliest duties of the first
 ruler. The thale rice became constantly scarcer and scarcer,
 and it was determined that it would be well to give every
 person his share and mark it off distinctly. The appointment
 of persons to execute this duty was the first occasion on
 which executive officials were found necessary. Manu
 enumerated twenty-five objects suitable for legal landmarks.
 These included all natural objects, such as lakes, rivers, ridges,
 and hills, remarkable large trees and clumps of bamboos;
 artificial boundaries of an equally permanent character, such
 as pagodas, shrines for demon-worship, zayats, or rest-houses,
 stone pillars and sacred posts, wells and cairns; finally such
 singular distinguishing marks as heads of cattle, chaff, ashes,
 charcoal, sand, broken earthenware vessels, and men's bones.
 "Beating the bounds," one would think, must have been very
 necessary with the younger members of the household in the
 case of such perishable boundary lines as could be constituted
 by chaff, or even sand. In Upper Burma the cultivating
 [161] population was so sparse that no difficulty was found in the
 matter of boundaries. In Lower Burma farms are as dis-
 tinctly marked off as land-surveyors' chains can effect the
 operation in pointing out the little raised ridges which
 separate the plots of paddy land from one another. Never-
 theless they are hardly such as the South of England farmers
 would approve.

423 These allodial tenures are the only ones which exist in
 ● [177-42] Burma now. In independent territory there were two other
 651 kinds of holding, which were not, however, very numerous or
 622 extensive. The first of these were called thugyisa fields, and
 consisted of certain tracts of land near the town or village
 set apart for the maintenance of the headman. As that
 official was anything but a permanency, the tenant for the
 time being very seldom cultivated them himself, but let them

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the plays, of which there are three or four, while some unwearied spirits can only find relief for their exultant triumph in yein dances and irresponsible performances of their own. Till dawn of day the revelry goes on, but there is nothing like drunkenness. It is exceedingly seldom that you see a drunken Burman out of Rangoon, where they claim to be Europeanised. For a couple of days the excitement lasts, and then the strangers wend their way homewards, and the township calms down to its usual quiet. But for years the great event will be talked of at the local feasts, and the Yein choruses of three or four generations will tell of the gallant struggle when the Daungsatpyan beat the Thônpanhla and broke the long supremacy of the Thônkwa rowers.

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It is a great pity that these old contests are not kept up with the spirit that used to characterise them. In 1877 the then Chief Commissioner of British Burma, Mr. Rivers Thompson, believing that they led to unrestrained and dangerous gambling, issued an order forbidding all government officials to have anything to do with them, and advising that great races should be discouraged as much as possible. This policy was continued by Mr. Aitchison (late Sir Charles), and there seemed some danger that the art of making fine racing-boats would be lost, while all the fun and jollity of the old ye-pwè, kôn-pwè, land and water sports, were put an end to, without any decrease in the amount of gambling. The habit is as engrained with the Burman as with the Chinaman, and if there are no boat-races to bet on there are lots of other things, from pony matches to gôn-nyin-to, on which sporting votaries might stake their money. There were still local matches between adjacent villages held, but they were but a sorry imitation of the old festivals, and have unfortunately led to the unpleasant speculations of the West being introduced. "Barneyings," in-and-out rowing, and all the unlovely customs of Western professionalism have sprung up as a consequence of the degradation of the old manly sport. Sir Charles Bernard, who was an ardent athlete himself, did a good deal towards reviving boat-racing. Sports have been held on the Great Royal Lake at Rangoon, it may be hoped only as a preliminary measure to the encouragement of longer contests on

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the great rivers again. The surest way of putting an end to "roping" and false rowing with the object of mere money gain, is to reintroduce the old honest, enthusiastic rivalry. Where every rower feels that the name of his village depends upon the prowess of his arm, there will be no "sugaring" and ignobly waiting, in Sheffield handicap fashion, to "have their heads loose."

All the races in the low country are rowed in hlaw hle, or hlaw laung, that is to say, in paddle-boats. Up country there are frequently contests in hkap hle, "pull-away boats," rowed with oars, but even there the national paddle predominates. It may be mentioned that the coast men are by far the better rowers. In the Mandalay October races in 1881, a scratch Bassein boat challenged all comers, and was victorious in every match.

There are a variety of boats, mostly, however, made on the same model, of which the launggo is the type. This is simply a canoe hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, the sides of which are drawn out by charring and inserting wedges; then the boat-builder chips out the centre. The laungsat is only a little larger and more commodious, plank sides being added to the solid keel, if it may be so called. The huge hnaw, or rice-boats, are made in the same fashion.

Of a different style are the pein-gaw, huge, ungainly, barge-like things, used principally at Yenangyaung for carrying oil. Along the sides, projecting over the beams of the boat, and reaching aft to the house raised on the quarter-deck, are tagin, a sort of platform for the polers to walk backwards and forwards on. Pihn-gaw keep mostly in shallow water, so that their ungainly weight may be moved along by poles, which is much quicker and less laborious work than rowing.

Barring exceptionally fine racing-boats, the hlawkadaw, or hlawga, the king's despatch boats, were the finest specimens of boat-building. They were gilt all over, even to the kat-tat, or paddles, and the stern rose high up in the air for the accommodation of the steerer. The express boats, or hpaungpaw, had usually a representation of the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu and national emblem of the Burmese, on the bows, and had often as many as sixty

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533 to bring chairs, tables, food and attendants for the sum of Re. 1/4 per
 177 head. The tune which was written to sing sentimentally of the Isle of
 177. Capri now sang, with romping glee, the English names of these delicacies:

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Vi-ta-mo, co-co *hnin amyō son myi*
 Ham pattie, cream roll *hnin cold coff-ee*,
 Columbia *dat pya hnin htè hso myi*,
 Plain cake *hnin Gold Flake le kyamma wè myi*.
 Etc.....

Vitamo, cocoa and all kinds you'll see,
 Ham patties, cream rolls and cold coffee
 With Columbia record playing merrily,
 Plain cake and Gold Flake will I buy for tea.

Expensive things, expensive things of all kinds for eating,
 I'll order from a restaurant for this fashion meeting.
 Sit up round a table in gathering so hearty,
 A very respectable tea-drinking party.

Don't eat of Burmese comestibles,
 They are so indigestible.

On the other hand the lilting tune of the Campdown Races was slowed
 down to sing :

Chit-te thu kō tway hma tha,
Seik pyaw,
Aye da.

Only when you see the loved one,
 Heart is happy,
 Mind at rest.

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Compared to dwellers of country towns, Yangonthu not only went
 to the cinema oftener, but also read a good deal more, probably in the
 absence of so many happy-eating-gatherings and charity feasts. There
 were four daily newspapers in Burmese and a few which appeared bi- or
 tri-weekly. The daily paper provided a lot of reading matter for the
 average person; a grandaunt of mine made it a daily institution to sit
 on her verandah with a bottle of lemonade and the *New Light of Burma*
 whose 24 pages were filled with international news, home politics,
 articles on the economic development of the country and attacks on
 abuses prevalent in social life, exhortations to good behaviour to the
 younger generation, reports of cases of a scandalous nature, just like a
 popular daily anywhere in the world. But in Burma there was no dis-
 tinction such as exists between a paper which tries to keep a dignified

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face, like the London *Times*, and papers which make sensational interest 177, their strong point. Similarly, poetry and clear prose were not the 53 monopoly of a class of intellectuals, although certain periodicals such 204 as the *World of Books* endeavoured to contain only literary excellences; 538 wit and vivid description could be present in the tuppenny novels. These two anna novels were largely drug-like and pornographic in nature. There was a great trade in them, about 30,000 being sold annually in Rangoon. Mobile circulating libraries functioned in the person of hawker boys who went round to houses, selling them at two annas each, returning the next week to buy the used copies back for one anna and selling a fresh lot. They also brought monthly magazines containing articles on a fairly wide variety of subjects. The following is a sample of the contents of one such popular magazine—costing 8 annas and read by all who read the tuppenny novels—*Kyi-Pwa-Yay*, PROGRESS-PROSPERITY, for September 1941.

Title	Description
Don't fear war	.. Wars are in the natural order of things, and we must not fear them but be ready to encounter them.
The Myook	.. Comic Verse.
Love and Vanity	.. Translation of English story with a moral.
Inscriptions of Pagan Period	.. Descriptive account of inscriptions in Pagan.
Win on Every Throw	.. Short story, set in gaming houses of Chinese quarter of Rangoon.
The True Burman	.. Instalment of series on muscular development.
Two Blossoms	.. Short story of a doctor's family in country town.
Impermanence of States and Races	.. Warning that the Burmese race may die out with wholesale settling of foreigners.
Biggest of their Kind	.. Information tit-bits.
Miss Fiery Temper	.. Love story of a bazaar girl.
Tour in Arakan	.. Factual and humourous account of visit to Arakan.

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177. Villager

• 53 Are we seeing aright?

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.. Short story.

.. Attack on prolonged nat-festivals at pagodas, as endangering physical and moral welfare of people, including attack on worldly members of monkhood.

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Horse-racing in Rangoon was a foreign importation, but nevertheless the stadium was always filled, not only with the fashionable section in an enclosure but also with rows of four-anna spectators who had been collected from all the streets of the town by the privately-run Burmese buses which tore along on race days, with two "spares" (spare-men in addition to the driver) hanging out from the back step and shouting to all they passed: "Race-a-ko, Race-a-ko! Race-course, race-course." But in the country the traditional boat racing was still alive. Boat races were held in every village which had a stream or river, as an annual event after the Lenten season. Long narrow canoes built in the village itself were rowed by twenty-two men and put out in rivalry between quarter and quarter, or between one village and another. At Ye the upper street and lower street put out boats bearing names of prowess or aquatic grace. The cheering and betting raged more furious and wild with the manner of the finish: the winning post was a boat in the centre of the stream, equidistant from the tracks of each boat, and across this was laid a hollow cane sticking about three feet out on either side. Through the hollow was thrust the prize *pan*: flower (of victory), a stick with a flag on each end. The winning crew was to seize this flower before it could be called victorious, and thus a dead-heat often sent both crews tumbling into the water as they wrestled for the prize.

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Burmans are said to have an irrepressible gambling spirit, even when no money is laid on. A stock example quoted by foreigners of the Burman's readiness with a dah in his hot temper, gives as provocation the anger worked up between two men who sit idly in a tea-shop, and for lack of amusement bet on the number of flies which will settle on the sugar bowl. I prefer the story of two street urchins, who saw two monks walking before them, sedately, with downcast eyes and steady pace, as monks should walk. "Look," says one idle urchin, "there are two hpongyis. You look at the one on the right, I'll watch the one the left. I bet you my hpongyi walks faster than your hpongyi." The monks ignore this, but soon begin to hear: "My holiness is going faster!" "No' mind!" Unobtrusively, each hpongyi tries to walk quicker and yet with dignity. The boys get thoroughly excited now. "My holiness!", "No, my holiness!" Soon the astonished spectators see two hpongyis

CHAPTER XXXI

MUSIC AND SONGS

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THERE are no teachers of music or singing in Burma, and there are no written scores. A musician commences his career by diligently listening to the performance of a good band. By and by he enters the village orchestra as a clapper player, and so learns the time and the peculiarities of various tunes, just as actors rise from the posturing and choruses of the children's and country yein pwès to the full dignity of dramatic performers. As a natural consequence there are occasionally variations, and indeed every pulwè, or flute-player, has his own particular mannerisms, but these are never so great as to materially alter the character of the air, and such tunes as the tedat, apudaik, lóngyin, and so forth, which occur in every zāt, are as familiar to everybody as "God save the King" and "Auld Lang Syne" are to an Englishman. Nevertheless it is very difficult for a foreigner to catch the air, and I have not been able to get an English score of any of the really old national tunes. The melody given later on was taken down from the playing of a well-known pwè leader in Maulmein, and has been harmonised for the town brass band by Mr. W. G. St. Clair, formerly of that place, to whom I am indebted for the score. So true is it to the air that many wealthy Burmans have the band to play at domestic festivals, funerals, and the like, and are satisfied to have the one tune played over and over again a score of times. But the kayāthan is of modern origin, and, as Burmans always say, in the English style, though Englishmen will persist in saying that there is nothing English about it. It has somewhat absurdly been adopted by the

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British army as "The Burmese National Anthem." It makes not at all a bad quick march, but it is about as appropriate for a national anthem as "Champagne Charlie is my name." In the acknowledged national airs it is very difficult to get a definite rhythm, the music being apparently, at any rate to all but experts, a mere succession of recitative, more or less Wagnerian in its style.

The instruments of a full Burmese band always include the following, whether the occasion is the orchestra for a play, the music for a dance, for a wedding, an ear-boring ceremony, or a funeral. A saing-waing, an elaborately carved, circular, wooden frame, painted in parts, standing between two and three feet high, and five feet or more in diameter. Round the inside of this are hung drums of graduated sizes, which are struck with the hands of the performer, who sits in the middle. The alternate dry and saturated state of the atmosphere renders constant tuning necessary, and this is effected by tightening the drum-heads, and also by smearing on with the fingers a paste made of burnt rice husk. The music produced is rather thin in itself, but by no means unpleasing. Similar to it in construction, but not standing so high, is the kyí-waing, the only difference being that graduated gongs take the place of the drums. The gongs are of course beaten with a knobbed stick, and not with the hand. These ponderous instruments can only be carried about in a cart, and their owner keeps perpetual guard over them, sitting in the centre, cheroot in mouth, for they cost a very considerable sum of money. Fair specimens of both the drum and the gong-harmonicon may be seen in the South Kensington Museum. In addition to these, there are in every band two or three hnè, trumpets or clarionets, with a broad bell-shaped mouth, which is movable and ordinarily but loosely attached. The noise of these is always very prominent, and is not relished by people who do not care for the bagpipes. There is also a similar number of pulwè, or pyue, a rude kind of flute. The best pulwè-player is always the leader of the band. Then there are ya-gwin, big cymbals, and than-lwin, little cymbals, and the patma, a long drum like the tom-tom of India and beaten with the hand in the same way. Finally there are the wa le'kôt, each formed of

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are used to strike them with. The notes produced are surprisingly clear and melodious.

Fiddles may often be heard played with greater or less skill, especially on the pagoda steps by blind and deformed beggars, but the instrument is not national, and is never, or but rarely, found where Europeans have not penetrated. The same may be said of the young Burmans who play in Rangoon on the concertina and the English fife and piccolo. It is flattering to national pride to notice with what accuracy and rapidity they pick up English airs.

But except at funerals and other solemn occasions instrumental music is looked upon not so much as a means of enjoyment in itself as an accompaniment to the human voice, and mere orchestral concerts would never draw the crowds which a single good singer can always command. The recitative character of the music is always more evident in the singing than in the instruments, and each "prince" or "princess" has individual peculiarities in the way of trills and staccatos introduced into the legitimate air. As the young musician learns by hanging about the band, so a vocalist follows an acknowledged great singer about and imitates his style, or at any rate learns the tunes and the words. The latter are, however, very immaterial, for the language itself is so pliant that it is easy to express the ideas in rhythm as you go on. Maung Tha Byaw, the great singer of his day, always made his songs as he sung them, and this was so well known that whenever he appeared, whether in a regular play or only to sing a few airs, there were always thirty or forty reporters sitting round to take down his words in their parabaik. This peculiarity of the Thabinwun occasionally got him into trouble. A somewhat incomprehensible piece of palace etiquette rendered it treasonable to sing a thanzan, a new song, before the king. Maung Tha Byaw several times, whether through too great laziness to learn the words, or from the force of habit, transgressed this rule, and was several times ordered out to execution. But he sang to the taunghmu and the pagwet, and these grim customers, the gaoler and the executioner, unable to resist the melody of this latter-day Orpheus, hid him away and exhibited some less talented

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person's body in evidence of having carried out their orders. Then when the next palace concert came on, the king—his late majesty—would grow tired of the ordinary vocalists and regret that the great improvisatore was gone. Whereupon Maung Tha Byaw would promptly come forth and sing his sweetest. He was killed in this way several times, but in the end died a natural death, about the same time as his contemporary Yindaw Ma Le.

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The honours he received were quite on a par with European estimation of musical talent. He had a patent to carry a golden umbrella, and, as Thabinwun, had magisterial powers to punish those who offended him or refused to obey his edicts. Two lictors went before him to clear the way, a white cloth being tied round their fasces as a distinctive mark. When he performed in a play a low yaza mat, or royal fence, extended across the front of the stage, and at the ends were planted his golden hti and a banana-tree. The latter distinction was also granted to Maung Tha Zan and Maung Mu, singers only inferior to the Thabinwun himself.

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If the tunes are not easily reduced to regular rules, the difficulty with the metres is not less. There exist, indeed, written laws ordaining the number of feet to the verse, but they are as lightly regarded as is consistent with their recognition at all. Much more precision is indeed expected in the old tunes than in those of modern date, but even with them song-writers of the present time allow themselves considerable freedom. The original *linga* are all very short. Thus the *pyo* has but four syllables; *kabya*, four; *yatu*, six and four; *luta*, four; *yagan*, six and four; *ëgyin*, four, five, and six; *hmawlôn*, four and six; *paikzôn*, four; *legyo*, four; *sagyin*, four, five, and six; and so forth. In the *thanzan*, or new tunes, however, the compass of the lines often approaches the portentous length of some of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Such modern tunes are the *kayāthan* (so-called English), *dobatthan*, *nabethan*, *nanthein yodaya* (Siamese), and *pyigyithan* (Chinese). Such compositions as the *lôngyin* and *ngogyin* cannot be designated otherwise than as musical prose, with occasional fits of metre, prompted by their dolorous character. They are the

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semi-precious stones, or gold dust, all cut with many tiny facets. We once had in our house a heavy glass vase, imported by an English firm, of a dull bluish-black colour. One day a wind mercifully blew the vase on to the floor where it broke into a hundred pieces. My cousin gathered up the pieces and the next time she went to Mandalay her button cutter fashioned them into several sets of round sparkling buttons catching the light and showing now black, now grey, now blue, one set of which I wear to this day. These and the velvet slippers which are universally worn were sold in the market by young Burmese women sitting opposite the tha-yet-hè longyi sellers. The slippers also came from Mandalay, and in the days of the last Burmese king, the common people were forbidden to wear them; they were reserved for royal use alone.

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At last my sisters considered that I was suitably dressed as the elder sister of such fashionable young ladies as they had now grown into, and equipped to attend any social function of the town. Although Burmese people love gathering to eat and drink, hotels and restaurants did not exist in Rangoon society. Both the Western restaurants where people danced and drank alcoholic drinks, and the leading Chinese restaurants where the dolled-up Chinese waitresses served the male customers with playful attentions, were out of bounds for Burmese women, and therefore not greatly frequented by Burmese men either, except in the case of the Chinese hotels as a carousal. Night bazaars were, however, eminently respectable, all Rangoon families being addicted to the habit of eating out as a supper after their dinner at home. They drove in cars to the pavement stalls of Chinatown, Moghul Street and Yegyaw; at Burmese stalls they got out and squatted on the benches provided, while the seller served them from the cooking pot beside her; at Indian and Chinese shops they had a plank thrust through to rest on the doors of the car, and ate sitting there. After eating rich Mohammedan food or delicious Chinese dishes, they drove a few streets further on to eat in the same fashion at an ice-cream or sherbet stall. It was a good life indeed.

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We usually did this after the cinema. While we went to see American films, my mother and her friends invariably went to a Burmese film. There were four Burmese cinema halls in Rangoon, whose box offices were always besieged, but in spite of this the cinema industry in Burma was not a thriving one. Actors and actresses were poor and suffered a social stigma. About twenty-five feature films were produced in Rangoon each year, both sound and silent, by companies whose prosperity never lasted more than a few years. They could often be seen filming their outdoor scenes round the Royal Lakes, the University Estate and the fields around Mingaladon, using studios only for indoor scenes. In spite of this, the effects aimed at were ambitious, especially in the earlier

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days when the themes were from mythology and legend rather than modern streets, thus necessitating flights through the air, chariots in the clouds, magical transformations, magnificences of palaces and celestial gardens lighted by the moon. Now the films go in largely for themes of real life, but unlike Western films, the actors and actresses still do not set the standard for everyday dress and behaviour. A cinema actress, even when playing the part of a girl of most respectable parents, was rendered attractive by touches which in real life were considered by my mother to be suggestive of loose behaviour—her hair was overdecked with flowers, her garments had floral designs, her forehead was bordered with a fringe, and the neck of her jacket fitted loosely. On the screen, however, my mother and aunts watched this enthralled. They liked also the way that love was shown, concentrating on sentimentality rather than sex. There was no kissing or attracting attention to the body, but oh the pining, the sighing, the stamping of feet, the coyness and the moonlight gazing of Burmese cinema heroines. No wonder that aunts who once in a long while accompanied us to an American film, looked all around during the passionate kissing scenes, with scrutiny of our reaction to such displays of what should not be admitted to exist.

If the Burmese cinema failed to draw the crowd of young English-speaking men and women away from the Hollywood films, Burmese rendering of jazz conquered them completely and gave them no acquaintance with the originals from America and England. There was a body of modern songs in the true Burmese style which, unlike the old classical songs, could be sung with ease by the untrained voice, but despite this Burma did not escape the craze which has grown up in all countries of the Far East for snatching up tunes written in America and England and putting them to words in the native tongue. Still, Burmans of fastidious taste might object to the lack of music in the tunes, rather than to the words of these popular songs, for the Burmese words are never so execrable as the original English compositions; often there is real wit, poetic brevity, and even philosophic comment. The technique was to take the refrain of a Western jazz tune as the repetitive theme, with a slight alteration in the rhythm, and to embroider this extensively with a slapdash quality of Burmese turns of melody. The theme of the Burmese version probably bore no relation to that of the original. For example, the sickly account of a romantic meeting in the Isle of Capri was converted into a satirical skit on the Rangoon fashion of giving garden tea-parties in the English manner. Whereas the Burmese custom at weddings and other celebrations in the country towns was to invite townspeople to a full meal, with the feasting of monks and the distribution of gifts, the Yangonthu had taken to employing the catering services of Western-style restaurants

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533 to bring chairs, tables, food and attendants for the sum of Re. 1/4 per
 177. head. The tune which was written to sing sentimentally of the Isle of
 Capri now sang, with romping glee, the English names of these delicacies:

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Vi-ta-mo, co-co *hnin amyō son myi*
 Ham pattie, cream roll *hnin cold coff-ee*,
 Columbia *dat pya hnin htè hō myi*,
 Plain cake *hnin Gold Flake le kyamma wè myi*.
 Etc.....

Vitamo, cocoa and all kinds you'll see,
 Ham patties, cream rolls and cold coffee
 With Columbia record playing merrily,
 Plain cake and Gold Flake will I buy for tea.

Expensive things, expensive things of all kinds for eating,
 I'll order from a restaurant for this fashion meeting.
 Sit up round a table in gathering so hearty,
 A very respectable tea-drinking party.

Don't eat of Burmese comestibles,
 They are so indigestible.

On the other hand the lilting tune of the Campdown Races was slowed down to sing :

Chit-te thu kō tway hma tha,
Seik pyaw,
Aye da.

Only when you see the loved one,
 Heart is happy,
 Mind at rest.

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Compared to dwellers of country towns, Yangonthu not only went to the cinema oftener, but also read a good deal more, probably in the absence of so many happy-eating-gatherings and charity feasts. There were four daily newspapers in Burmese and a few which appeared bi- or tri-weekly. The daily paper provided a lot of reading matter for the average person; a grandaunt of mine made it a daily institution to sit on her verandah with a bottle of lemonade and the *New Light of Burma* whose 24 pages were filled with international news, home politics, articles on the economic development of the country and attacks on abuses prevalent in social life, exhortations to good behaviour to the younger generation, reports of cases of a scandalous nature, just like a popular daily anywhere in the world. But in Burma there was no distinction such as exists between a paper which tries to keep a dignified

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177. Villager

.. Short story.

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Are we seeing aright?

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.. Attack on prolonged nat-festivals at pagodas, as endangering physical and moral welfare of people, including attack on worldly members of monkhood.

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Horse-racing in Rangoon was a foreign importation, but nevertheless the stadium was always filled, not only with the fashionable section in an enclosure but also with rows of four-anna spectators who had been collected from all the streets of the town by the privately-run Burmese buses which tore along on race days, with two "spares" (spare-men in addition to the driver) hanging out from the back step and shouting to all they passed: "Race-a-ko, Race-a-ko! Race-course, race-course." But in the country the traditional boat racing was still alive. Boat races were held in every village which had a stream or river, as an annual event after the Lenten season. Long narrow canoes built in the village itself were rowed by twenty-two men and put out in rivalry between quarter and quarter, or between one village and another. At Ye the upper street and lower street put out boats bearing names of prowess or aquatic grace. The cheering and betting raged more furious and wild with the manner of the finish: the winning post was a boat in the centre of the stream, equidistant from the tracks of each boat, and across this was laid a hollow cane sticking about three feet out on either side. Through the hollow was thrust the prize *pan*: flower (of victory), a stick with a flag on each end. The winning crew was to seize this flower before it could be called victorious, and thus a dead-heat often sent both crews tumbling into the water as they wrestled for the prize.

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Burmans are said to have an irrepressible gambling spirit, even when no money is laid on. A stock example quoted by foreigners of the Burman's readiness with a dah in his hot temper, gives as provocation the anger worked up between two men who sit idly in a tea-shop, and for lack of amusement bet on the number of flies which will settle on the sugar bowl. I prefer the story of two street urchins, who saw two monks walking before them, sedately, with downcast eyes and steady pace, as monks should walk. "Look," says one idle urchin, "there are two hpongyis. You look at the one on the right, I'll watch the one the left. I bet you my hpongyi walks faster than your hpongyi." The monks ignore this, but soon begin to hear: "My holiness is going faster!" "No'minal!" Unobtrusively, each hpongyi tries to walk quicker and yet with dignity. The boys get thoroughly excited now. "My holiness!", "No, my holiness!" Soon the astonished spectators see two hpongyis

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● [177-54]

Buffalo fights, which used to be great festivals in the Tenasserim province, especially round about Amherst and Tavoy, have, under the influence of the British Government, almost totally died out. Each village used to have its champion, songs were composed in its honour, and special guards appointed to look after it, and the conqueror brought as much honour to the village as a personal victory of the inhabitants would have done. But they were nearly as brutal exhibitions as Spanish bull-fights, and only a little less dangerous.

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Field sports are barred to all but professional hunters by the religious objection to taking animal life, though when a Burman does enter upon the pursuit, he is always an enthusiastic and skilful sportsman and generally a clever shot.

taking life. Only the hardened ones of the village, *ta-nga-thè*, drew and netted in the wealth of fish around Ye, and the theoretical condemnation in which their profession was held absolved all good Buddhists from any sin in eating the fruits of their labours. My aunts bought vast quantities of fish for salting and drying. This cured fish supplied our yearly needs as well as theirs. They also bought prawns to press into a paste called *ngapi*, in this case *seinsa ngapi*, which forms the basis of all our flavouring and condiments. As soon as the *ta-nga-thè* came up with his boatloads of prawns they were spread out on rough bamboo mats and sunned on the big platform behind the house. When they were fairly dried, my aunts, with a helper or two from the village, mashed up the prawns by hand, throwing in vast quantities of salt as they worked. The mess was left in the sun for a few days, being stirred every now and again. By this time it had turned into a grey-black paste, more or less smooth, smelling most pungent and rotten to foreigners but *hmway-dè*, fragrant, to us, and tasting like a concentrate of anchovy. This paste is stored in small glazed earthenware jars. It is used to flavour all meat and vegetables dishes, or is fried or pounded with other ingredients to provide condiments for the meal. The Tenasserim coast is the chief source of *seinsa ngapi* in Burma, the big towns of Tavoy and Mergui supplying towns in Upper Burma as well. The large amounts of salt needed come from the valuable salt fields in this area which produce about 6,000 tons annually.

It can be imagined what excitement a holiday at Ye caused us in our growing years, and even my mother's admonitions that we were to behave in accordance with strict Burmese ideas which prevailed at Ye rather than the un-Burmese habits acquired at school did not dampen our excitement. We were then at English-speaking schools where we had adopted the habit of calling each other by name. The eldest of my young sisters Mya Mya, is seven years younger than I am, but when she went to school I had only two sisters left who called me respectfully, *Ma-Ma Gyi*, elder sister, and by the time the youngest was at school there was no Ma Ma Gyi left in the family. The tradition of the younger ones fetching and carrying for the elder had also sadly deteriorated.

At meals, my mother had not kept up the custom of helping the eldest person present with a portion of every dish before it was open to the rest of the company. Before we went to Ye, therefore, my mother gathered us around her and told us how we were to behave so as to give our grandmother and aunts great pleasure in our visit and no rude shocks. "Now don't forget, *the-mi-to*, my daughters, you will all three call your sister Big-Elder-Sister; you, Pusu, are to call Mya Mya Middle-Elder-Sister, and Aye Little-Elder-Sister. In fact you should

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to have the pagoda attended to. A very small acquaintance with human nature induces the belief that this will not be done if individual effort is trusted to do the work. Therefore prisoners of war and others whom it is not convenient to put to death are dedicated to the service. So strict is the dedication that any one who attempts or connives at setting free a pagoda slave is condemned to misery in the lowest hell, awizi. The servitor of the shrine can be employed in no other duty than keeping it in order, and kings and great men are threatened with loss of power and dire destruction if they venture to employ such outcasts as servants, even in the meanest capacity.

Slavery of the familiar form known in semi-civilised countries formerly existed in Upper Burma, but the pagoda slaves are a perfectly distinct body. A person who sells himself, or is sold, by his relation for debt is in a very inferior position doubtless and cannot enjoy any very great privileges. But he can always work his release, and is not thereafter considered as lying under any particular stigma. But the parakyun are neither more nor less than outcasts. They are looked upon as unclean, and the rest of the community will have no intercourse whatever with them. So much

● [17756] is this the case that under British rule, which has of course freed them from their compulsory servitude, they are still looked upon with no less aversion than they were when the country was independent, and though nominally free to do as they please, have to travel into districts where they are unknown before they can find employment even of the most menial kind.

It is no explanation of the taint that the original servitors were prisoners taken in war, condemned convicts, or people expressly sentenced to this office on account of hideous crimes. The reverence for the pagoda cannot be exceeded, why then should the care of it and the surrounding buildings be considered to make its compulsory guardians vile and degraded people? In the old autocratic days it was a common thing for a pious sovereign to set apart certain villages, or a stated number of houses in those villages, for the service of the pagoda, and the victims were selected, quite regardless of personal character, by the village head-

taking life. Only the hardened ones of the village, *ta-nga-thè*, drew and netted in the wealth of fish around Ye, and the theoretical condemnation in which their profession was held absolved all good Buddhists from any sin in eating the fruits of their labours. My aunts bought vast quantities of fish for salting and drying. This cured fish supplied our yearly needs as well as theirs. They also bought prawns to press into a paste called *ngapi*, in this case *seinsa ngapi*, which forms the basis of all our flavouring and condiments. As soon as the *ta-nga-thè* came up with his boatloads of prawns they were spread out on rough bamboo mats and sunned on the big platform behind the house. When they were fairly dried, my aunts, with a helper or two from the village, mashed up the prawns by hand, throwing in vast quantities of salt as they worked. The mess was left in the sun for a few days, being stirred every now and again. By this time it had turned into a grey-black paste, more or less smooth, smelling most pungent and rotten to foreigners but *hmway-dè*, fragrant, to us, and tasting like a concentrate of anchovy. This paste is stored in small glazed earthenware jars. It is used to flavour all meat and vegetables dishes, or is fried or pounded with other ingredients to provide condiments for the meal. The Tenasserim coast is the chief source of *seinsa ngapi* in Burma, the big towns of Tavoy and Mergui supplying towns in Upper Burma as well. The large amounts of salt needed come from the valuable salt fields in this area which produce about 6,000 tons annually.

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593 always do so, at home and everywhere else, but mother understands
 177. that you make habits easily at your English school. Never walk into
 8 57 the house with your slippers on, as you do in the downstairs room
 here. When you eat with your grandmother and aunts, don't touch
 anything until your aunts have put a little of it into Grandmother's
 plate. And try not to talk to one another in English." All the way
 in the train my sisters would fling themselves at me and shout, "Big
 Elder Sister, Big Big Elder Sister."

528 We went to Ye during our summer holidays which were the longest
 592 in the school year and allowed us three weeks with my father and a
 264 month at Ye. It also enabled us to pay obeisance to our grandmother
 at the New Year, and to celebrate this loveliest of festivals in its most
 fitting surroundings. My Uncle San Lin usually sent his wife and our
 four small cousins at the same time, so that for one month in the year
 at least Grandmother could feel that the world of big towns and English
 civilization had not robbed her of any family affection. Sleeping and
 eating arrangements for the gathering of twenty odd people were
 no problems for the simple large-scale economy of the household. My
 mother had a bed, and beside it my Aunt Khin and all the children
 slept on thinbys laid side by side on the platform upper storey. Meals
 were eaten in successive rounds at a low table on the kitchen floor, not
 served as separate sittings, but by calling more diners as places were
 vacated, and filling each dish that diminished from the stove near-by.

529 Half of our visit to Ye was spent at the garden where we were
 177 surrounded by rich fruits and could bathe in the clear swift water that
 rushed through islands of reeds. We walked and rode in bullock carts,



for miles, to visit other gardens owned by Grandmother's friends—old
 men and women who lived there all the time, and who chuckled with
 delight to see us, for to them we were not ourselves, not ordinary

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tinkled with every passing breeze. The Shwe Dagon Paya was a beautiful and sacred thing. In the early mornings it gave a radiance to the clear air and the blue sky; in the daylight it shone forth like a blaze of gold, burning and pure; in the evenings it glowed softly as the breeze tinkled its bells, and filled the heart with a gentle sadness which is not grief but a sweet perception of unearthly things; and at night the lights flooded it to stand high and illumined above the dark wooded slopes of the hill. At all times and from all parts of Rangoon it could be seen, calm and sublime, with the same smiling look as is seen on the face of the Buddha, not smiling in the eyes or mouth but in the serene expression of inward calm. 346

As we landed in Rangoon we saw a great gathering of people waiting to meet us. Going abroad for years of study is still a rare enough event to be of interest to all relatives and neighbours, so that the people were assembled not only for an affectionate reunion, but also to observe in what way the stay in England might have corrupted Burmese habits. In the case of a man it is always feared that he may bring back an English wife, and it sometimes happens that a loved child who has been away for five and six years may be greeted with tears and mourning rather than expressions of joy, if he has married an English girl. The tears of mother and sisters are very heartfelt; they express shame at what the neighbours will think, sorrow at the alienation of the man and his children which must inevitably occur, and chagrin at the loss of the rich dowry which might have been procured in the marriage market. 177
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Even when a man does not marry in England, he is strongly scrutinized for undesirable preferences in the matter of marriage arrangements. I remember the night my brother came home. It was his first evening in Burma after nine years of English schooling and University, and it was clear enough that he was neither married nor secretly engaged to an English girl. But my Ma Ma Gyi, my eldest woman cousin who had children as old as we were, subjected him to a searching enquiry. "Set-Set," she said, calling him by his childhood name, "do you think English girls are more attractive than Burmese girls?" My brother who had many English friends but had not noticed any Burmese girls during his few hours in Burma, tried not to answer this question. On being held to it, he said they were different from each other and could not be compared. My cousin said, "But which do you like better?" She was getting quite stern by this time, and my mother and we who felt very sorry for my brother were all prying that he would tell a lie, as we held our breath. My brother repeated with much awkwardness that the two were different; so now my cousin took his opinion for granted, and lectured him on the desirability of marrying in an orthodox Burmese manner so that he would prove himself a good son to his mother, a good

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177. brother to his young sisters, and thus give joy to the whole family.
 • 57 "For," said she, "our family has always commanded respect. Grandfather
 873 was a great man, and you are the only son of the youngest family of his
 186 grandchildren, and it should not be said that with us the end tapers to a
 382 point;" which is the expression for a stock which degenerates with
 successive generations.

In the case of a girl, there was not of course, the fear that she would bring back an English husband, but the concern that Burmese standards of morality and dignity would be affected by an unchaperoned stay in a foreign country was very great. As we landed, I remembered enough of my childhood environment to feel the eyes of elder relatives and friends on me while I tried to restrain the wild excitement and love I felt at seeing again my mother and my young sisters now grown so sweet and shy, and I noticed also that my brother had been home long enough not to kiss me in front of my aunts as he had done when he himself had first returned from England. I felt this scrutiny also when my mother took me on the round of obeisance visits during my first days at home, and it formed a complement to the visit which I had paid to each of these elder relatives and friends before I left for England three years before. Then, each had given me a lecture which contained strong injunctions to keep to the path of virtue, modesty and dignity. But these were just *son-ma saga*, admonitory words, to be received with meekness, and not a slight on the strength of my character, just as now, when, satisfied with their scrutiny, they told my mother that her womb should be layered with gold leaf (sacrilegiously using the term for the gilding of sacred objects) for having brought forth such daughters, I was not expected to take conceit.

[192] In all the houses of friends in Rangoon, in Thaton and Ye, I went
 192 through the same ritual, but the words of the hpongyi at Thaton moved
 166 me more than any other. "Now I will tell three stories about Mi Mi Khaing," he said, and proceeded in beautiful words and a chanting flow: "You are like a young tree planted of good seed in the fertile earth. Now the tree is heavy with ripe fruit, but the boughs are tender and bend under the weight. The tree must grow carefully and steadily, so that the full fruit do not break the young bough..... Let your stature be measured by your shadow that is cast after the noonday sun, for your knowledge and learning are now at noonday height. So your shadow will grow longer and longer towards the setting of the day..... Let your merit be like a river that gathers more strength from the rain that falls about it, and grows from a stream into a great river before it joins the mighty Thammodhaya." Then he took the monk's expression off his face, and turned to me with a smile and asked in a normal speaking

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never talked about the business of their past working days when they met. Sometimes they showed a fleeting interest in news of the postings of friends still in service, but even the official matters of Thaton district itself did not enter into their discussions. They talked of charity donations, of the respective monasteries which they endowed and attended, and of formulæ of *eggaya-hto*, alchemy, or the search for the philosopher's stone which will turn all metals to gold. Most Burmans get interested in *eggaya-hto* during their later years, even if few now practise it.

This alchemy, which has no place among the true teachings of Buddhism, has to be done under auspicious astrological influences and is usually carried on in secret. Burman Buddhists condemn the use of it when it is carried on for *lauba*, greed for riches, but others justify the process as a means of concentrating the mental faculties. The common stories tell of hermits in the forests, who by their ascetic life and concentrated meditation have more powers over the forces of nature, as being well versed in the processes of alchemy. When such a hermit achieves the extreme concentration of mind on his task he is successful—the philosopher's stone is discovered, the body of the hermit then disappears in the dissolving of matter, and his spirit is free to live unhampered by the body, till the arrival of the next Buddha on the earth. Most Burmese women, however, although they believe that this happens in the case of hermits, object very strongly to the practice of alchemy on the part of their menfolk, owing to the money and energy that is wasted on seeking out new and expensive formulæ once the craze has got hold of a man. All experiments are started with mercury which is melted with other minerals, animal or vegetable substances which derive their magical properties partly from their inaccessibility, partly from being treated with prescribed rites. My father had no intention of taking up alchemy and impoverishing us, but he too was very interested to hear of the success and failure of various methods. These discussions must have been kept well anchored to reality by the other chief topic of discussion—the families of the pensioners.

The five duties of a parent towards his children include the settling of the child in a good marriage. By the time the *a-so-ya mins* retire, their sons and daughters have reached a marriageable age. The sons are in the process of winning a good position in one of the government services and their daughters have been dressed with an adequate amount of jewellery. The marriage market, which had no existence in former Burmese society and which still is unheard of in Ye, and among the poorer people, is now a very concrete institution among the educated and modern classes. The rise of the *minkadaw* class and of higher paid Class I government officials has been mainly responsible for this. More

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593 and more within recent years, the higher government services have come
 584 to be associated not only with "face", but with *gon*, prestige, and *ausa*,
 554 authority, which together make up a *myet-hna-gyi*, big face, in Burma.
 177 Mothers of daughters want their daughters to have *gon* and *ausa* and be
 • 58 big of face as the wife of the senior government officer in a town, and
 565 mothers of sons want to get the most for themselves and their other
 children out of having such a golden goose. They want a girl with
 wealth, a meek nature, good looks, religious piety and education, more or
 less in this order. So that the imperfect daughter-in-law may lack the
 last named qualities rather than the first. Wealth means not merely
 money, property or jewels, but an absence of younger brothers and
 sisters or other potential dependents, this being a very important factor
 in our closely-knit family system. A relative of mine who had just seen
 his son enter a top service, showed my father his comprehensive table
 of the marriageable girls of Burma, under headings of family connec-
 tions, amount and form of property, potential dependents, physical and
 moral qualities of the girl. My father should have been keenly interested
 as the father of a son who was studying in England with success, and,
 indeed, when my brother returned, he might have fetched us about
 Rs. 30,000 had he desired, so far have we progressed beyond the Burmese
 traditions of the man's family asking for the hand of the girl with presents
 of money and jewellery.

It may be asked, what of the men who are thus bartered? Bur-
 mans are very greatly attached to their mothers; few can resist a mother's
 tears, and the tears in these cases are genuinely of grief, because the
 mother sees this marriage as a faithful discharge of one of her five
 duties. The five duties of a child towards its parent, on the other hand,
 include the support of father and mother, and in making this marriage
 the man sees the best way of providing comfort to his parents in their
 old age. For the girls also, an arranged marriage is not necessarily a
 joyless thing. Girls who are educated as we have been, in spite of reading
 Western romances, are brought up to believe that a girl will grow to love
 her husband who is good to her. *Tha-na*, pity, compassion, and *chit*,
 affection-love, are very close in Burmese; the usual way for a wife to
 address her husband is *Maung*, the same word as younger brother, or
Ko Ko, elder brother; some husbands address their wives as *nyi-ma-lay*,
 little sister. And, in fact, in most cases the results do bear out the wis-
 dom of this attitude towards marriage; so that to most Burmans it is the
 "free" Western marriages which so often appear ill-assorted and lead
 to divorces. Still, it cannot be denied that much undignified haggling
 and manœuvring go on nowadays, in the efforts to obtain the best
 match for sons and daughters. *Aung-thu-ès*, go-betweens, get a lot of

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face from bringing something off, money is paid in advance, rush tactics are employed to prevent the man returning from abroad from marrying the sweetheart of his college days, and in some cases even magic is resorted to, though in secret. This black magic, especially, involves some very undignified actions. A younger cousin of mine once warned his mother: "Please, Mother, never try to sell me like a bullock, or worse still to arrange a marriage for my sister. I will not help you to jump thrice on eggshells or throw ten viss of fish into a well at dead of night under instructions from a soothsayer." 593 584 554 177- 58 [789]

Although marriages were constantly being arranged among our circle of friends in Thaton, I was not allowed to attend weddings as a young unmarried girl. What we did attend regularly with the grown-ups were the *u-bok-nay*, the duty day gatherings every week in the resthouses among the hills. On these days Buddhists who choose to observe the day, obey eight or ten precepts instead of five. Amongst these ten are the abstaining from food after mid-day, absence of ornament and cosmetics in dress, meditation and prayer, and absence of a high couch in sleep. In Thaton the observance of this day was made the weekly social event with the same combination of material enjoyment and religious piety that characterizes all Burmese functions as described previously. Each family went to the hills early in the morning with mats, betel boxes and a well-cooked meal. The girls wore all the jewellery they had because we had not yet taken the precepts, and this was a good chance of showing that a family did not lack wealth. We met in the resthouses, to one of which a monk came to intone the precepts. These we repeated in chorus after him; then the elders talked and chewed betel, and at about 10-30 the whole party went to bathe in the pools made by the waterfalls down the hills. We went back to find the pooled dishes of four or five families laid out in a rich feast. We stuffed ourselves with this. The law states that food should not be eaten after noon, and the law was always obeyed in the letter if not in the spirit. [585] 527 [556]

One maiden lady in Rangoon who kept duty days regularly ate till as near noon as she possibly could. She usually finished her meal with fruit, and if she was eating a banana when noon struck with a loud bang from the cannon at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, "Haw!" she would exclaim, and in would go the whole length of the banana into her mouth. After noon, tea and coffee are not allowed either but aerated waters, which look so much like water, are sanctioned. When my husband was a novice monk in the monastery, they were allowed medicinal products also after noon, and the hungry young novices often made a delicious soup of garlic (a digestive) fried in butter (medicinal component), and water poured on to the fragrant compound. 755 527 [278]

647 Service and beginners in the B.C.S. II. It entailed the charge of a unit
631 of administration known as the township, a collection of village tracts,
with headquarters at a town of about two to five thousand inhabitants.
The township officer supervised the administration of villages and the
land system, helped in the suppression of crime and revenue collection,
acted as government registrar, and carried out duties assigned to him
by his senior officer. This was the Sub-divisional officer, in charge of
two or three townships. Two or three sub-divisions were in turn
grouped into a district under a Deputy Commissioner, a post attainable
by members of the B.C.S. II before their term of service if they showed
talent, but more often held by members of the B. C. S. I. Three
to eight districts were grouped in divisions under a Divisional Commis-
sioner who had civil and revenue powers and was responsible to the
Governor for every department of public service except special branches
directly under the control of the central government. There were eight
Divisions in Burma.

When my father was an S.D.O. he had various magisterial, civil
and revenue powers. Besides exercising these duties in the sub-divi-
sional headquarters, he toured around the sub-division for about ten
days in the month and we sometimes accompanied him. When he was
stationed at Myanaung we went to Ingabu where my mother had
good friends, Pauktaing where there was a great and revered
Image of Buddha, Kyangin which had a thriving silk-weaving
industry. In a township headquarters like Kyangin we met only the
Township Officer although the town was divided into blocks or wards,
each of which was under a headman whom my father also had to meet.

647 But in a village like Pauktaing we came directly into contact with
631 the headman, the *thugyi* or "elder person", who, as a source of local
177. authority over villagers, is a carry over of the administrative system under
• 63 the Burmese kings. The headmen in those days were properly de-
621 scribed by their name of *thugyi*. They were chosen by the villagers and
assisted in their duties by a group of elders. The headman distributed
the burden of the revenue that was due from the village among the
villagers and collected it, being allowed a percentage of the collections.
He was the village magistrate and sometimes the village judge. New
settlers in the village had to obtain his permission to take up abode.
The office tended to become hereditary, and in those times when there
was little contact between the central government and the local adminis-
tration of the peasantry, the authority of a good headman was a strong
influence that extended over more than one village. In present times,
however, each village has been established as a separate administrative
unit under one headman; the Township Officer, the Sub-divisional

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Officer have appeared as higher sources of authority which are present not far away, and the village headman has lost much of his standing as elder person responsible for law and order, retaining chiefly his position as tax-collector. This is to the loss of village administration.

As a-so-ya mins, men like my father had more power and prestige than they had money. The salary of a B.C.S. II Officer, which ranged from Rs. 300/- to Rs. 900/-, was enough to ensure easy living and a certain amount of saving for old age, but in the place of the expensive carpets, glass, silver, uniformed servants and tinned foods which we saw in English officials' houses, they had to spend what might seem to foreigners a disproportionate amount on two items: jewellery for the women and financial help to relatives. Jewellery is not a vanity for a Burmese woman but an article of dress, worn both day and night, in varying degrees according to whether she is working or out on pleasure. The word for jewellery does not include any description of gems, but is *let-wut let-sa*: wear for the arms and such. When servant girls enter a household the humblest of them is given a gold chain to hang around her neck or a bangle for her wrist. Thus among the classes who have any money to spare beyond that for mere sustenance, from the more affluent cultivators, the small traders and shopkeepers and clerks, to "rich" land-owners, mill-owners and government officials, a great amount of money is spent on jewellery. Not to have any would be an unbearable shame.

A complete set of jewellery for a well-dressed woman comprises the following articles, all worn together when attending shinbyus, ear-boring and marriage ceremonies, official functions and numerous other occasions. For the hair a *sado*, a hairpin with a single large diamond on the end; a comb with teeth of gold and a row of diamonds set closely along the back of the rim; a *sein-pan gaing*, a gold hairpin with a cluster of flowers to hang and dangle, set with diamonds. These articles have the gold parts embedded in the knot of hair and only show the diamonds. Round the neck are worn the *le-gat*, a narrow gold collar set widely with diamonds, fitting like a vice; below this a double row of small pearls tied tightly behind with red tassels; the *le-ton* "trembling necklace"—a "choker" necklace—sitting so that little chains set with diamonds hang from it all round the neck and tremble; a chain with a diamond locket below this. In the ears are worn single diamond studs. On the jacket five diamond buttons, attached to gold rings set with diamonds, fasten the button loops. On the wrists and hands diamond bracelets and as many rings as possessed, of rubies, emeralds and sapphires set with diamonds are worn. A young girl also wears hollow anklets of gold round her ankles. In addition to the above, the richer minkadaws and wives of big traders possess corresponding pieces of rubies, emeralds and

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592 sent to stay with us at various times and were sent to schools which taught English, but nothing would persuade them to take any interest in studies. My cousin Nyein Maung, whom I liked very much, could never bear to keep a shirt on, which was why he was always to be found with only a longyi tucked around his loins playing chinlon or helping boatmen with their canoes, when he should have been sitting fully clothed in a class-room.

[601] My young Uncle Pyant, whom we called U-Ngè, small Uncle, had passed his B.A. and his law degree, and returned to Ye in preference to a more modern life in a larger town. He walled off one doorway's space from the main room of the house and filled it with bookcases, a big desk and chairs for visitors. Outside this room my Uncle Pyant put up a sign saying: "*A-htet-tan shaynay gyi* : Advocate and Higher Grade Pleader," and within a very short time became the lawyer of the whole village; but so great was his attachment to this consultation-living-room, which had nothing in common with the rest of Ye, that he relinquished all cases whose developing complexities led client and lawyer to a higher court in Moulmein.

592 Grandmother had gardens about ten miles up the creek from Ye. 244 These contained coconuts, durians and areca nuts grown over about 276 fifty acres for commercial disposal. Around the bungalow in the centre 427 of the garden there grew mangosteen, rambutan, pomeloes and pineapples for eating on a large-scale, clumps of bamboos, a coffee tree, tobacco plants, capsicum, lime and citron trees, lemon grass, and vegetables of all kinds to serve the needs of the bungalow and the household in town. My aunts with one young male relative took turns to live at the garden and help the family that was hired to look after it permanently. It was a dangerous life in these plantations as dacoities were very frequent.

[501] The produce was taken down to Ye in a succession of graceful narrow boats shaped out of single tree trunks. The durians and coconuts were sold straight away to traders who travelled between Moulmein and Ye [242] for this purpose. The areca nuts were first dried on a bamboo attic made by an extension of the platform upper storey of the house until it met the back slope of the roof. When they were dried the whole family gathered around in the back kitchen and removed the husks with blunted nutcrackers, leaving the smooth nut to be sold.

244 With the rice from the paddy-land on the opposite bank, fruits, 262 vegetables and spices from the garden, rolling their cheroots with a mixture containing tobacco in leaves shed by the areca trees in the garden, 226 and grinding their own coffee berries, my aunts and grandmother only 438 needed to buy a little fish and meat for their daily consumption. This 276 they could not provide themselves owing to the Buddhist law against

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Some thirty people about the Court were beheaded, and the queen dowager was relegated to the convent.

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Thibaw himself was brought up in an uncle's house and used to be unmercifully bullied by his cousins. When Dr. Marks, the eminent S.P.G. missionary, came to Mandalay and established a school, the late king asked what was the best age for a Burman to commence learning English. The reverend gentleman said, "About twelve years old." King Mindôn called for "all his sons that were twelve years old or thereabouts." Eleven were produced, and among them was Thibaw. The future king went to the royal school, but he sat apart from his late victims, and never came to school on the same elephant with them. He was a surly, morose boy, not very good at his lessons, and once or twice narrowly escaped the usual result of such conduct. I believe he was never actually birched, but he had several times to stand in the corner. When he left he was able to read a little, but he has forgotten all his English now. He used to be fond of cricket, and slogged away in fairly good pendulum form; but he never would field out, and used unprincely language to any one who bowled him. He was the youngest of the batch by a month or two, and was always quarrelling with his brothers and bullying the wretched slave who attended him and carried his cheroots and betel-nut. But nobody paid much attention to his vagaries then, for he was twentieth or thirtieth son, and the Mekhaya prince, the eldest, might very easily have been his father, or even grandfather.

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After he left the S.P.G. Royal School, King Mindôn made him a koyin, a neophant, in the royal monastery. There he seemed to get on better. At any rate when his novitiate was over, he passed with honours as Patama Kyaw, an examination in the Bitaghat thônông, the three "baskets" of the Buddhist law, and sundry other volumes of ritual and controversy. This was what first drew the old king's attention to him. Mindôn Min was a very pious old gentleman, and had a particular delight in his title of Convener of the Fifth Great Synod. When therefore young Thibaw made a score in the Turanian Theological Tripas, his father bored everybody with his talk about the juvenile

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Kin Wunmingyi, who, after all, had been to Europe and was versed in public affairs, lost all influence, and was succeeded as adviser by the Taingda Mingyi, a statesman of the typical oriental kind, supple, unscrupulous and grasping. Thibaw even achieved a certain kind of popularity with his subjects. He insulted our representative and blustered at all foreigners, and finally frightened the Indian Government by covert threats into suddenly withdrawing the whole *personnel* of the Residency. Then it was announced by sound of gong all over Burma that the Sovereign of Land and Water, by reason of his great might and glory, had caused the hated English to flee from his sight, and would, in his own good time, carry the great peacock flag to the south, and plant it once more on the shores of the Gulf of Martaban.

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It is a great triumph for the pōngyi's son, as he was nicknamed when it was safe to do so, and it will be remembered about him quite as long as the fiendish cruelty of his massacres. We have certainly not done with Thibaw yet. We cannot go on for ever keeping strong garrisons at Thayet-myo and Toungoo, our frontier stations, where the soldiers have little else to do but die of fever and cholera and heat-apoplexy. Constant scares ruin the trade in Rangoon, and, as Lord Ripon says, when we are attacked in our mercantile interests we are wounded in our most irritable point. The abrogation of the monopolies is little better than a sham, and the negotiations for a new treaty are little more sincere. Thibaw will not receive a new Resident in the Royal City, except shoeless and practically lying on his stomach. We can hardly agree to that again.

The rupture came six years later, brought about by secret treatings with France and autocratic dealings with the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation. The Burmese kingdom fell with the suddenness of a paralytic stroke, and King Thibaw was a prisoner within a month of his rejection of the British ultimatum. He now lives forgotten at Ratnagiri.

177. metic book for an old man called Samuel who produced a series of swot
87 books on various subjects, beautifully tabulated books with questions
876 and answers, invaluable for examinations and used even in my day
when we and our school teachers whisked them out of sight of Education
Inspectors who came on the prowl for just such unprogressive methods
of education. He also went across to the American Mission School
where quite often the teachers were more Christian and painstaking
than brilliant, to help old Teacher Nellie with Geometry riders, and in
this way he met my mother.

873 My parents could not get married as soon as they left school. My
593 father had first to go to the University, which consisted then of Rangoon
562 College, affiliated to Calcutta University, and then he felt he must work
582 to buy my grandmother a big enough plot of paddy land so that her two
youngest sons would not need to look after her in Ye, but could come
into the world like my father. He now felt that they should not be
denied the wonderful opportunities which he had found. My father
did go to College, but had passed only his F. A. (corresponding to In-
termediate) when he heard that my mother was now going out to teach in
a school at Thaton, and that she was having to put on a European gown
and hat in order to be less conspicuous, because at that time no Burmese
Buddhist ladies went out to work. My father left his studies at once
and got a job in the same school to look after her, and it was only after
some months of persuasion by Grandfather and my mother that he
consented to leave and look for a better paid position.

647 He managed to obtain a myookship in the Government Service,
177. which is a junior administrative post but considered a very good job for
65 Burmans in those days. In this job he could save enough to buy Grand-
582 mother her paddy land, after which he and my mother would get married.
But my father with his good looks, his teetotaller habits, and his myook-
ship, was considered a desirable son-in-law by many people, and other
parents were not like Grandfather; they would try to engage the young
man's affections for their daughters. I am sure my mother spent the
next three years in some anxiety, as she heard stories of the young
myook's gay and happy life in such far-off towns as Toungoo and Shwe-
gyin. But one day the children dashed up to her with a telegram; she
opened it and read *Gyi will you marry me*. My mother, who has
never shown any excitement as far as I can remember, got up very
quietly and went to her chest of drawers. She took out ten annas in
change, and wired back Yes.

584 Soon after this my father arrived amidst great excitement on the
part of my mother's family and a pretence of complete ignorance on
Grandfather's part. My aunts expected an explosion from him when

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CHAPTER FOUR

647 BY the time that I was about four years old my father had become
 565 a Subdivisional Officer in the Civil Service, and our family had
 177. joined the ranks of what has now come to be known as the *min-*
 65 *kadaw* class, an *a-so-ya min* being a government official and *minkadaw*
 the wife of a *min*. The *minkadaws* usually referred to were in the great
 majority the wives of officials of the Burma Civil Service, Class II, and
 by the time that we were passing through our childhood and adolescent
 years they already formed a very definite stratum in Burmese society. We
 children now comparing notes with the children of the *minkadaws* posted
 as far apart as Tavoy and Myitkyina can find common characteristics in
 all the households, from domestic commodities and meal habits to
 social conventions and standards of wealth. It is as though a new upper
 middle class has grown up, complete with snobberies, in what was for-
 merly a classless Burmese society, but a class that still keeps itself quite
 apart from the European gymkhana life of the district towns.

631 The houses which I can remember, when my father was a Sub-
 647 divisional Officer in the subdivisional towns of Zigon and Myanaung
 344 where he was in charge of the subdivision, or in the divisional head-
 quarters town of Magwe where the whole hierarchy of *min* from the
 Commissioner downwards were present, or in the district headquarters
 town of Maubin where the *min* ranked down from the Deputy Commis-
 sioner and my father was Headquarters Assistant, all bore certain uni-
 form features. They were all wooden, two-storied and large, with a
 sufficient number of big rooms to have a dining-room and an office room
 below, a sitting-room above the portico and two big bedrooms, besides
 little verandahs and odd rooms. They all had a front staircase for com-
 mon use and one or two ladder-like staircases behind for watermen,
 sanitation and servants. The kitchen was about 20 yards away,
 connected by a covered passage, and at the back of the large garden or
 compound was the *tanya*, a row of rooms for men servants and Indian
 351 servants. The garden in front was usually modest owing to frequent
 changes of occupants, but a minimum amount of flowers for daily vases
 on the altar had always to be cultivated, and fruit trees were prized
 highly, guava, mango, marian or citron.

592 Unlike most Burmese households we did not have any aunts or
 359 other relatives staying with us, but we had our full quota of domestic

178 were still a good number of the tame fish, tame enough to allow you to stroke them and put gold-leaf on their heads, but there were far from being as many as there should have been had the villagers duly observed the teachings of the Buddha. The primeval simplicity of the people is fast fading away throughout the province. The travelling Englishman finds no difficulty in either getting people to sell fowls, or others still less hampered by doubts, to wring their necks and cook them.

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103 The monastery sometimes has a name of its own; more frequently it is called by the Pali name of the town or pagoda near which it lies, or by that of its prior. The Thayet-daw Kyaung in Rangoon is so called from the magnificent mango-trees that grow within it. Well known in Upper Burma is the monastery of U Sandimā, or the Mingala-san Taik, where King Mindōn received his instruction in the religious texts which he knew so well. The name is usually given by the founder after consultation with the proposed head of the community, and it cannot be said that the consultation results in much originality.

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Here and there throughout the country there are a few yatheit, hermits who withdraw into solitude in forests and desert places, and, like the old rathi (from which word of course the Burman term is derived), they live on wild fruits and roots and the chance alms of passers-by. But as the rathi were closely connected with the Brahmins, and as the custom is not recommended by the Buddha, nor looked upon with favour by the people, it is not of frequent occurrence. Occasionally a very austere monk buries himself in the solitude of the jungle during the season of Lent, in order the better to devote himself to meditation, but even this is not common. Nevertheless in the rocks above Nyaung-u, near Pagān, there are a few cells dug out high up in the cliffs which are always occupied, as any one who has gone out to shoot the rock pigeons which abound there will very speedily find. The yatheit comes down, confiscates the bag, and drives away the sportsman with terrible threats of future punishment. Such caves and holes in the rocks are not uncommon on other parts of the Irrawaddy, wherever the ascetic is able to climb up and finds the stratum soft enough to hack

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There is a percentage of thirty-five in the "middle standard" (Government Education Department). What matters if the successful halt and stumble in the pareit-gyi? There are two boys who have a chance in the Calcutta University Matriculation Examinations. It is a matter of indifference that the thingyo is as unknown to them as it is to any poor foreigner. Nevertheless, notwithstanding their shortcomings in this respect, there are but few even of these young Burmans who have not become members of the society, if only for long enough to get their heads shaved and be invested with the yellow dress. Still in these latter years there are a few who have never gone through even this slight ceremony, and the number may be expected annually to increase as Western habits spread more widely over the country. Not till the monastic schools begin to be deserted will the Christian missionary find that his labours have had any effect on the vital energies of the ancient faith of the Buddha. That day is still far off. As yet the government and vernacular lay schools have had very little effect in reducing the number of scholars who go daily to study in the dim-lighted schoolrooms of the monastery. Not even in Rangoon have the monks to call for scholars; they flock there abundantly of their own accord.

kyaungs has led to very imperfect and limited knowledge of these treasuries of sacred knowledge. Formerly it used to be said that the man who did not know the Thadda, the Pali "grammar," knew nothing. If this position were insisted on now, the number of ignorant people in Lower Burma would be somewhat startling.

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But there are many difficulties before you get to the Abidhamma and its cognate subjects. Even in the Payeit Gyi there is a section called Ta-zet, or Ta-zet-thut, which has the credit of sending many a probationer back to the noisy, sinful world. According to the couplet—

Shin pyet ta-zet,
Loo pyet a-yet.

Brandy sends a man to hell ;
Ta-zet spoils the saint as well.

It is a sort of religious *Pons Asinorum*.

Besides prosecuting his religious studies, the shin is required also to attend on the pon-gyis and minister to their wants. He must lay before them at fixed times their daily food, the proper supply of water, the well-used betel-box, and whatever else the monk may require. He must of course go round every morning with the other members of the monastery, the begging-bowl strapped round his neck, accepting meekly, without word of thanks, or glance thrown to the right or left, even when he passes his father's house, the food poured in by the pious. When a pon-gyi goes abroad the neophyte may be required to follow, carrying his fan or umbrella, or perhaps an arm-load of palm-leaf books, if a function is to be performed anywhere. According to the strict letter of the law the ko-yin ought to eat only of the food presented in the morning, but a very great laxity has crept in in this respect, not only with the neophytes, but even among the professed members of the order. It is no uncommon thing for the parents of the youth to send in daily a special meal for him, or even, in the case of wealthy families, actually to keep a cook on the monastic premises to prepare his food. Such sybaritism is not by any means uncommon in Lower Burma, though even there hardly approved of. In any good monastery in Upper Burma, or

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indeed in any monastery at all, even in Mandalay, it would be promptly put a stop to. But where the monks themselves show the example of carnal weakness, the probationers cannot be expected to maintain the old austerity.

The shin is subject in every way to the discipline of the monastery, but there are very few additional rules really incumbent on him. He has to observe always the Sè-ba Thila, the ten commandments. Five of these are obligatory on all Buddhists at all times: the other five are supposed to be incumbent upon laymen only on sacred days and during Lent. The five universal commandments are:—

1. Thou shalt not take any life at all.
2. Thou shalt not steal.
3. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
4. Thou shalt not lie.
5. Thou shalt not drink intoxicating liquor.

The additional five are:

6. Thou shalt not eat after mid-day.
7. Thou shalt not sing, dance, or play on any musical instrument.
8. Thou shalt not use cosmetics, or colour the face.
9. Thou shalt not sit, stand, or sleep on platforms or elevated places not proper for thee.
10. Thou shalt not touch gold or silver.

These latter five are, it has been said, imposed upon laymen on sacred days, but the burden is very light, the people observing them or not, accordingly as they are observing the "duty-day." If they are not "keeping the feast," they conduct themselves precisely as they would on any other day, and buy and sell and attend pwès in their ordinary fashion.

This laxity is, of course, not open to the shins, but it cannot be said that the regulations, except perhaps as to eating, are very irksome. The seventh and eighth commandments seem by themselves peculiar, but they refer to filthy habits more explicitly set forth in the Patimauk, or book of the enfranchisement, containing the 227 sins which

527 thought that the few hours spent at the payā gather up stores of kutho, not less certainly profitable than the social delights of the "duty day" are pleasurable.

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101 The greatest of all the pagoda feasts is, of course, that of the Shwe Dagôn in Rangoon, with its pilgrims, not only from the farthest parts of Burma and far-away Shan hills, but also from over the seas, from Siam and Cambodia and the Corea. But the vastness of the gathering and the proximity of the great town spoil the national character of the festival, and introduce too many elements of nineteenth-century civilisation in the shape of merry-go-rounds and hack carriages. A "jungle" feast is not only more characteristic, but more appreciated in its way by both town and country folk.

796 There are three old Talaing pagodas near Rangoon, Kyaik-ka-san, Kyaik-ka-lo, and Kyaik-waing, whose annual duty days are looked forward to with pleasure by all the people round about. The feasts all occur in the month of Tabodwè, corresponding to our February or March. I have a suspicion that, were the proper date adhered to, all three would have the same uboné; but such a lavish squandering of the good a popular religion provides for us would hardly meet with lay approval, even if advocated by the most holy of hermits. Accordingly the three pagoda days occur at intervals of a week, without reference to the crescent or waning moon; and latterly, with singular convenience for Burmans occupied in business in Rangoon, have usually been fixed, for Sunday; so that English merchants are not troubled with the sudden ailments of their clerks at this season so much as used formerly to be the case. The Kyaik-ka-san is probably the most sacred of the three; containing as it does a tooth and bone of the forehead of Shin Gautama, brought to Rangoon by a yahanda, a blameless mendicant, over whose remains in Rangoon a huge thein-gyi, or ceremonial building, has been erected. Kyaik-ka-lo is, however, seemingly the more popular. It stands on the summit of a little hill about fourteen miles north of Rangoon, and is built of laterite blocks, now faced with bricks covered with plaster. The shrine was built in the second century before Christ, and,

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she is made to smell samôn-net, a plant (the *Nigella sativa*), which is put in an earthen pot, strongly heated, and then triturated into the shape of a ball. The odour is not exactly such as one would recognise as calculated to exhilarate any one, but probably after the hot bricks and the se sein everything else comes as a matter of detail. All this is done to drive out the noxious humours which are supposed to be generated by the birth of a child. On the seventh day the woman takes an elementary kind of Turkish bath. She sits over a large jar of boiling water, medicated with tamarind twigs and a few other kinds of leaves and grasses, with a blanket over her. After about an hour of this she has a cold bath, and is then free to do as she pleases. She usually goes to bed.

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It might be supposed that under this treatment death in child-bearing would be very frequent, but as far as imperfect statistics can show the percentage is not much higher than in other countries. The result, however, appears in another way. A woman ages up ten or fifteen years for every child she has. It is satisfactory to notice that in all the larger towns in Lower Burma the more unpleasant features are fading away before the example and influence of women of other nationalities. In the jungle and in Upper Burma, however, ancient use and wont still prevail, and the young mother of fourteen or fifteen is shrivelled into thirty with her first baby.

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If a woman gives birth to a still-born child, a piece of iron is placed in the cloth in which the body is wrapped, or in the coffin if there is one, and at the burial some member of the family says some such formula as "Never more return into thy mother's womb till this metal becomes soft as down."

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If a married woman dies before bearing a child (alôn hnin the-thi), a Cæsarean operation is performed, and the alôn is buried in some secret place. The reason alleged for this is, that were it not done, the husband in future existences would marry this woman again, and she would die in the same way. Were the embryo not secretly buried it would be disinterred by himaw-sayās, necromancers, and wizards, who would make evil uses of it. Children's cauls are as highly thought of by Burmans as they are by English

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In recognition of this new-gained power the novice drops
his secular name and receives a *bwè*, an honorific title, to mark that it is now open to him to escape from suffering. The name lapses when he returns to the world again, but it is sufficient that he has once borne it. He may now add to his *kan*, merit, and gain for himself a glorious new life by good works.

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This is what is meant by calling the ceremony a baptism. The *bwè* are almost invariably Pali, or Burmanised Pali names, and follow the same rules with regard to initial letters as the *lu nāmé*. Thus a Maung Po Myat, born on Thursday, might take the name of Pyinya-Zawta, while the *bwè* of a Sunday child, Maung An, would be Adesa. This religious or Buddhist (on the analogy of Christian) name is, of course, retained by the regular members of the monastery, and a monk is never addressed by any other when a name is used at all. When he becomes old a U is added, as U Adesa, but it must not be forgotten that

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the use of a person's name in addressing him is considered very far from being polite in Burma, especially to one of rank and dignity such as a mendicant. On the other hand, one who has returned to the world never uses the *bwè*, not even when he accomplishes some great religious work such as the foundation of a pagoda, which according to a comforting belief ensures passage to Ne'ban after death.

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The entry into the monastic order is therefore certainly the most important event in the life of a Burman, since only under the robe of the recluse and in the abandonment of the world can he completely fulfil the law and hope to find the way to eventual deliverance from the misery of ever-recurring existences. The popular time for the ceremony is just at the beginning of Wā, the Buddhist Lent, which lasts from July to October, roughly speaking. Strict Buddhists make their sons stay throughout the whole Wā. During that season feasts, though they do occur, are very much discountenanced, and dramatic performances are energetically denounced by the religious.

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According to the letter of the law the intending probationers should have reached the age of fifteen, but this regulation has almost entirely lapsed in Lower Burma, among other reasons chiefly because that is just the most

important age for the boy to be learning English and arithmetic, with a view to getting situations under Government or in English merchants' offices. Therefore in the vast majority of cases shin-pyu thi takes place at the age of twelve, or perhaps even a year earlier.

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If the boy has been a scholar in the monastery beforehand, he is sure to be already prepared in all that is required of him. If not, he gets a few hasty lessons in the duties that will be incumbent on him. He must address a full member of the order in such and such language; he must walk decorously through the streets, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground six feet before him, and on no account gaze round him, no matter what exciting events may be going on; he must wear his thingan and du-gut in the prescribed fashion; he must eat with dignity and circumspection, and so on. All these details are set forth in most minute fashion in a code. When he has mastered the most essential portions, and has also given proof of an acquaintance with the ordinary forms of worship, all is ready. His horoscope now comes into requisition, and a bedinsayā or Ponna is called in to determine a lucky day and hour from the sadā. When this has been settled, three or four girls, the intending koyin-gale's sisters, or friends of the family, dress themselves up in their finest silks and jewels—often borrowing a large quantity of the latter—and go round the town, announcing to all relatives, friends, and neighbours when the induction will take place, and inviting them to the feast, presenting the little packet of le'-pet usual on such occasions. Almost all of these send some little present, either of money or victuals, to aid in the feast and make it as grand as possible. Not unseldom, if somebody else's son is also going to enter the kyaung and the town is not very large, the two join forces, while occasionally as many as half a dozen unite, especially if the families are not well off.

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On the appointed day the young neophyte dresses in his finest clothes, and loads himself with all the family gold chains and jewellery, and as much more as he can borrow for the occasion. He then mounts a pony or gets into a richly decorated car. Shaded by gold umbrellas, allowed formerly on this occasion only in Upper Burma, except to those who had got a special patent for them from the sovereign...

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CHAPTER THREE

MY mother, as I have said, was the fair young jewel of her father's eye; and my grandfather had flashes of the most radical behaviour. Though he refused to learn English and this irreligious language was never spoken in his house, he suddenly decided to send my mother to learn English, not just as a second language, nor even to spend a few years at a totally English-speaking school—for an accomplishment, as a few other Burmese girls of the time did—but to study seriously until she passed the High School Standard of a European Code school which did all its teaching in English. My mother was thus the first Burmese Buddhist woman to pass the High School Examination in the European Code, and today she can speak faultless English though she never uses it unless necessary, and can even read some of the books of Virginia Woolf, although she does not like them. She and her two young brothers were sent to Moulmein; they stayed at the house of my eldest uncle who had settled there, and my mother attended an American Baptist Mission School. This was just before 1900.

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My father, in the meantime, had arrived in Moulmein at the same time as my mother. The world had opened for him suddenly. After the strict and simple life of the monastery he found himself a smart young man with a Western crop and a collared shirt and outer jacket. He carefully put away his mother's ring to be put on again only on his visits back to Ye; he found a big and busy town to range in and no anxious mother waiting at home. I think it was during these years that my father got his love of all the sweet pleasures of life. A non-smoker and a teetotaller, he was one of the most spontaneously happy people. He loved food and many friends, to see young people happy and free from discipline, to spend all his resources in order to create happiness around him; he glorified the ability to think and work quickly and leave the maximum time for eating and laughing.

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Particularly in this, Moulmein appealed to him. Having grown up in the monastic system of education by memorizing, he was bewildered at a system which prescribed a whole year of full-day studies for five or six thin text-books. As soon as he could read and understand he committed all his year's text-books to memory within a month, and could not conceive that there was anything else to be learnt unless they prescribed ~~such books~~ to be memorized. During school hours he wrote an Arith-

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177. metic book for an old man called Samuel who produced a series of swot
87 books on various subjects, beautifully tabulated books with questions
876 and answers, invaluable for examinations and used even in my day
when we and our school teachers whisked them out of sight of Education
Inspectors who came on the prowl for just such unprogressive methods
of education. He also went across to the American Mission School
where quite often the teachers were more Christian and painstaking
than brilliant, to help old Teacher Nellie with Geometry riders, and in
this way he met my mother.

873 My parents could not get married as soon as they left school. My
593 father had first to go to the University, which consisted then of Rangoon
562 College, affiliated to Calcutta University, and then he felt he must work
582 to buy my grandmother a big enough plot of paddy land so that her two
youngest sons would not need to look after her in Ye, but could come
into the world like my father. He now felt that they should not be
denied the wonderful opportunities which he had found. My father
did go to College, but had passed only his F. A. (corresponding to In-
termediate) when he heard that my mother was now going out to teach in
a school at Thaton, and that she was having to put on a European gown
and hat in order to be less conspicuous, because at that time no Burmese
Buddhist ladies went out to work. My father left his studies at once
and got a job in the same school to look after her, and it was only after
some months of persuasion by Grandfather and my mother that he
consented to leave and look for a better paid position.

647 He managed to obtain a myookship in the Government Service,
177. which is a junior administrative post but considered a very good job for
65 Burmans in those days. In this job he could save enough to buy Grand-
582 mother her paddy land, after which he and my mother would get married.
But my father with his good looks, his teetotaller habits, and his myook-
ship, was considered a desirable son-in-law by many people, and other
parents were not like Grandfather; they would try to engage the young
man's affections for their daughters. I am sure my mother spent the
next three years in some anxiety, as she heard stories of the young
myook's gay and happy life in such far-off towns as Toungoo and Shwe-
gyin. But one day the children dashed up to her with a telegram; she
opened it and read *Gyi will you marry me*. My mother, who has
never shown any excitement as far as I can remember, got up very
quietly and went to her chest of drawers. She took out ten annas in
change, and wired back Yes.

584 Soon after this my father arrived amidst great excitement on the
part of my mother's family and a pretence of complete ignorance on
Grandfather's part. My aunts expected an explosion from him when

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joking enquiries about whether we were getting enough Buddhist and Burmese teaching for we were attending English Christian schools at the time.

The monks have lost all touch with the schooling of the great majority of children by now. In the first decade of the century the monastic schools were still the backbone of instruction for boys throughout all the rural districts, being responsible for the high literacy figure of 49% for Burman males, as compared with 11.9% in Madras at the time. But lay schools, either established and run on Burman lines, or established by Christian missionary societies with perhaps grants-in-aid, or under the direct management of Government or a committee acting on behalf of the government, were springing up on all sides, until by 1934 the proportion of lay to recognized monastic schools for vernacular education was about five to one. Although there had been attempts to raise the utilitarian value of monastic education by the encouragement of such subjects as arithmetic, geography and land surveying, it was far easier for the lay schools to conform to the standards set by the Board of Examiners. With the passing of such standards becoming the means of obtaining employment and the changing of fashions, more and more children went to the lay schools. Moreover, the lay schools included schools for girls, either separately or in common with boys.

In my childhood there were still echoes of the opposition between monastic and secular education. In about 1922 my Uncle Pyant, who was then a serious student at the University, told me the world was round, "but", he added, "the hpongyis say that this is not true and most elder people don't believe it." My husband also tells me that when he went home from his government school with the statement that the earth spun around on its axis and took twenty-four hours to do it, the elders were most scornful. "In that case," they said, "if you were to go up into the air and stay there for some time, you could not come down to Kengtung until the same time the next day, but might land in England for your lunch."

Another difference between old and new ideas of education was that the elder people were aghast at the long years which a modern education from primary schools to University lasted. They felt that at least one must have learnt everything there was to learn by then, for a few years at a monastery taught a boy all the reading, writing, calculation and literature which any grown man was expected to know. Once my grandfather received a telegram announcing the birth of a grandson; the message contained the additional information that the doctors had found it necessary to perform a circumcision on the infant. The telegram was in English, according to the rules of the Posts and Telegraphs in Burma,

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792 and Grandfather called my cousin Ko Lu Pe to read it. My cousin had
 871 been at a government school for some years and though he could read
 177. and write English with some ease, he stuck at the word "circumcise".
 87 "What!" exploded Grandfather, "five years learning English, and you
 can't even read a telegram. This education is quite useless." Where-
 upon he took the grandchildren and his two young sons out of their
 schools until his wrath subsided and they quietly started attendance
 again. It is a popular stage joke also, the B.A. who returns to his village
 and is asked in good faith by the hpongyi to mend a villager's watch that
 has gone wrong. The graduate confesses that he cannot mend it. The
 monk is horrified: "What, passed B.A. and cannot mend a watch?"

527 So now on my father's birthday the monks ask jokingly and kindly
 792 about our school subjects. Their meal is laid out on a low round table,
 574 and consists of all the good things my mother can think of, for they have
 only one main meal in the day. Rice and meat and vegetable dishes are
 followed by fruit, sweet milky coffee, sweet English cakes. The monas-
 tery boys are given their meal outside; the monks, after eating, rise and
 go, and the boys follow them bearing away the gifts for the monastery.
 At once there is a general shuffling into more relaxed positions, conver-
 sation swells out, we start to scamper around and help to wheel in more
 round tables. Then everybody eats, and my father feels a deep sense
 of well-being.

805 Our lunar calendar has twelve months in its year, beginning the new
 year about the middle of April with the month of *Tagu*. Each month
 contains the twenty-nine to thirty days of the moon's cycle, but the dates
 are numbered with only 15 numbers—15 waxing days starting from the
 crescent of the new moon: *la-hsan ta-yet*, *la-hsan hna-yet*, new moon
 first day, second day and so on, until the 15th and full moon day, *la-pyit*
nay: after which come the waning days, *la-hsot*. With this system, we
 are 12 or 13 days short of the 365 each year, and hence every second year
 there occurs a double month of *Waso*, in July and August, which month
 also starts our Lent. Lent lasts the three months of the monsoon, until
Thadingyut, in October, when we see it out with lights, feasting and
 much merriment. For the observance of festivals such as New Year
 and Thadingyut we usually visited relatives, but certain other observances
 came round each year to us in our own home.

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 252 Such is *htamanè-hto*, the making of a comestible known as *htamanè*
 in vast quantities, for distribution on the first full moon after the harvest.
 On the full moon night of *Tabodwè* in January-February, the villagers
 sit up all night in big parties of men and women singing and joking as
 they make all preparations for the cooking that is to take place by dawn.
 The basis of *htamanè* is a glutinous rice called *kaukhyin*, always

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CHAPTER TWELVE

WE lived at Thaton for two years, and then my father became ill and had to be moved to Rangoon for treatment. This meant the packing up of the household, and when my father died shortly afterwards, my mother never went back to live at the great echoing house, but stayed in Rangoon to be near our schools. Thus the long period of our district life came to an end. From now onwards, my mother and sisters were to become merged in the increasing company of *Yan-gon-thu*, Rangoon dwellers, but we saw nothing of this life yet. School walls and student interests at the University enfolded us, and our holidays were spent at Ye and other country places. I was already at the University by this time, after having spent nine years at an English school—nine years during which the alternating periods of school and holidays transported me by turns into two completely different worlds, each kept shut off from the other by childish self-consciousness and reticence. The educational system in Burma did not have a homogeneous structure owing to the different media of instructions in use, and I have always felt that we were the particular victims of this shortcoming. Mistakenly sent to exclusive schools, we were denied the company of a great crowd of Burmese play mates during the greater part of these nine years.

Classified according to the language of instruction, there were three types of schools in Burma—the Vernacular, the Anglo-Vernacular and the European. There were over 5,000 recognized vernacular schools in Burma, which contributed towards raising the literacy of the poorest classes, but did little more. The pupils could not hope to continue their studies at the University where the medium of instruction was English, and, although high-school classes were introduced after 1931, they did not qualify a student for any post except that of teaching in such a school. There were few well-paid posts open to those without a knowledge of English.

The great bulk of schools in Burma were Anglo-Vernacular schools, where instruction was carried on in Burmese, but English was taught as a subject; and in the highest classes, some of the text-books used were in English, as the translation of schoolbooks into Burmese was still at an infant stage. My experiences of teaching at the Teachers' Training College, Rangoon, where we had an Anglo-Vernacular school for model

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871 teaching and practical training of educational students, were a fair
 177. example of the multiple forms of instruction prevailing. I taught in
 87 Burmese from a text-book which had not yet been translated into Bur-
 198 mese, as the subject, Home Science, was a new one. I explained the
 lesson and questioned the pupils in Burmese, but when summing up the
 points on the blackboard, wrote in English, so that the copying children
 could more easily correlate the matter with the contents of their English
 text-books. When answering examinations they were free to write in
 English or Burmese, and there were many who had a deficient knowledge
 of English but preferred to write in this language because the text-book
 had been in English. Among the educational students taking notes,
 also, there might be included a few Anglo-Burman students who did
 not know Burmese well. Up to 1935 it was still possible to enter
 Rangoon University without any knowledge of Burmese, and one grade
 of the Burmese "lectures" there started with the learning of the alphabet,
 progressing to the stage of writing sentences by the end of the two-year
 course. Almost all towns with a population of more than 5,000 inhabi-
 tants had a girls' school and a mixed school of the Anglo-Vernacular type

—either government or mission or national schools, which later received government aid. The majority of the students at the University was from these Anglo-Vernacular schools.

Finally there were the European Code schools, teaching in English with Burmese as an alternative second language to French or even to Additional English in the high school, until about 1933 when Burmese was made the compulsory second language and the standard of it was also raised to approximate more closely to the Anglo-Vernacular standard.

When my brother and I were first to be sent to school, about 22 years ago, government officials like my father were still under the impression that education in an English school would give a child a great advantage in making his way in Burma. All the examinations for higher government services were conducted in English, and all well-paid posts required a knowledge of English. We were therefore sent to a European Code school, although such schools were started primarily for English-speaking children. Owing to the peculiar social conditions prevailing in the schools at the time, we underwent acute misery during all the years that we were there.



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Such schools, both for boys and girls, were set up in the big towns, Rangoon, Mandalay, Moulmein, Maymyo, Toungoo, etc. Most of them were mission or religious schools, aided by the government and by the diocese or a religious mission.

Very few Burmans at that time sent daughters to such schools, though sons were sent commonly enough, and the distinctions made against the stray natives who entered the rolls began from the moment of entry. The diocesan schools insisted on our adopting English Christian and surnames, from an aversion to including heathen names on their registers. Burman Buddhist were thus transformed into orthodox Christian names: Sir Htoon Aung Gyaw and his brothers became a family of Thompsons, Sir Paw Tun was happily converted into Potter, and my brother U Sett Kaing, with less relevance, became Robert Downs. Thus many distinguished Burmans spent years under these assumed names. The Roman Catholic schools were kinder. They merely required us to adopt a system of first name and surname, which does not exist among Burmans, and wished us to pick a Christian first name so that the nuns could pronounce it easily. Thus we got Kathleen Maung, Grace Nee, Sarah Tin Gyi, the daughters of U Maung Maung, U Nee and U Tin Gyi. My own name Mi Mi Khaing was brought into line as Marnie Kaing.

We went to a Roman Catholic convent where the nuns made no attacks on Buddhism and no attempts to proselytise us—despite which I became attracted to their religion for a few years—but with sincere conviction and fervour they condemned everything else in us that was different from the great mass of Anglo-Burmans who filled the school. A good proportion of these children were the children of Englishmen who, not having entered into a legal marriage with the Burmese mothers, had now left mother and child with a sum of money which the kind nuns stretched to cover as much schooling as was possible. These and other Anglo-Burman children were encouraged to swank over us with childish cruelty about our darker skins, flat noses, and uncurling hair. They did this to such an extent that many of us in our minority and our helpless misery, branded our distinguished parents as being “half Burmese and half English”, in order to gain their good opinion. We were told that Burmese food was stinking, that the use of oil for the hair was dirty and insanitary, and when young sisters ran after their elder ones calling Ma Ma, Elder Sister, all the children hooted with laughter. No wonder that my sister Mya Mya during her first weeks at school would sit by the gate, evening after evening, singing mournfully:

May May yay-ay

La pa tau

Kyi-gan ta-maw maw.

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and ninepins, played with the big flat seeds of a jungle creeper. Pleasant they were under the shade of the great mango and pipul trees and the lofty cocoa-nut and palmyra palms, and exciting were the games, so that the customary stillness of the place was rudely broken upon by disputing voices, till a monk would come out and bring all back to work again as a penance. Then during the work there was the fun of the writing hour, when everybody had to write out maxims and prayers on his little parabaik with a clumsy pointed steatite pencil. There were always some stiff-fingered big pupils who could not manage to write their copy neatly or correctly, and as punishment had to take the good writers on their backs and march ruefully up and down the long schoolroom during pleasure. Sometimes they were thrashed, but the other punishment was the more dreaded. Then there was the schoolmaster monk, who would tell fairy stories of the other three great islands which lie in the sea round about Myinmo mountain; of the half-moon-faced western islanders, and the wondrous tree that bore everything eatable one could wish for and delivered it ready cooked; the joys of the six heavens of the Nats and the grisly horrors of Nga-yè, with its fearful ages of fantastic punishments. Every now and again travelling necromancers and hmaw sayās would spend a night or two at the monastery, and in recompense for the little delicacies and odds and ends of food which good-natured neophytes would get for them, used to tell stories of witchery and marvel. Sometimes there would be a sā-haw sayā, a kind of cyclic poet, who knew half the zats in the language by heart, and would recite a little just for practice. Or a tattooing sayā would come round and mark some particularly favoured youth with a quaint figure. Discussion as to its meaning and probable virtues would be carried on in the shadowy evenings for months afterwards. Varieties of this kind recur to the old Burman as he thinks of the school days long ago, and he sighs with as much conviction as any European that there are no days so happy as the school days.

English rule has disturbed old customs a good deal in the province, but even now we may say that, as an invari-

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he does will swell the sum of his demerits, but not a single good action, no uttermost act of charity or devotion, will be recorded to his advantage for another existence. Without admission to the order, without "Buddhist baptism," no man can count his present existence as other than an animal's. The great gift of having appeared in the likeness of a human being; the happy balancing of merits and demerits which has resulted in so glorious an opportunity of advancing towards Ne'-ban; the still greater fortune of existence in a country where the tenets of Buddhism offer supreme chances to the weary seeker after rest from the moil of a work-a-day world; all will have been recklessly thrown away. It is written that more hardly will a needle cast from the summit of Mount Myinmo across the wide Thamoddaya Sea, more hardly will it touch with its point as it falls another needle standing point upwards in the great Southern Island, than will any given creature become a human being. How are the Western foreigners, black and white, to be pitied, who have indeed by earnest strivings attained the seat of man, but, arrived there, find it all naught because they do not hear the teachings of the Buddha! How much worse the Burman, to whom all his life long the monastery door stands open, to whom a week's, a day's, an hour's sojourn would offer boundless possibilities, and yet who enters not in. If this be so, what then can be the prospect for the boy who having put his hand to the plough turns back, who entering the monastery as a child, imbibes the religious thoughts and becomes acquainted with the religious creed, and yet fails to seek the "humanity" so easily to be gained? Better have been born an animal or an Englishman, and scoffed at what he did not understand.

Consequently it may be invariably assumed that the little scholar, as soon as age and acquirements admit, puts on the yellow garb as a finish to his education. This used to include every one. Till the English came and took the country, everybody went to the Pon-gyi-Kyaung. But now there are English government schools; there are Burmese laymen's schools, which neglect religious education altogether, and look to competitive examinations as the end and aim of juvenile existence, as the ne'-ban of school life.

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There is a percentage of thirty-five in the "middle standard" (Government Education Department). What matters if the successful halt and stumble in the pareit-gyi? There are two boys who have a chance in the Calcutta University Matriculation Examinations. It is a matter of indifference that the thingyo is as unknown to them as it is to any poor foreigner. Nevertheless, notwithstanding their shortcomings in this respect, there are but few even of these young Burmans who have not become members of the society, if only for long enough to get their heads shaved and be invested with the yellow dress. Still in these latter years there are a few who have never gone through even this slight ceremony, and the number may be expected annually to increase as Western habits spread more widely over the country. Not till the monastic schools begin to be deserted will the Christian missionary find that his labours have had any effect on the vital energies of the ancient faith of the Buddha. That day is still far off. As yet the government and vernacular lay schools have had very little effect in reducing the number of scholars who go daily to study in the dim-lighted schoolrooms of the monastery. Not even in Rangoon have the monks to call for scholars; they flock there abundantly of their own accord.

kyaungs has led to very imperfect and limited knowledge of these treasuries of sacred knowledge. Formerly it used to be said that the man who did not know the Thadda, the Pali "grammar," knew nothing. If this position were insisted on now, the number of ignorant people in Lower Burma would be somewhat startling.

But there are many difficulties before you get to the Abidhamma and its cognate subjects. Even in the Payeit Gyi there is a section called Ta-zet, or Ta-zet-thut, which has the credit of sending many a probationer back to the noisy, sinful world. According to the couplet—

Shin pyet ta-zet,
Loo pyet a-yet.

Brandy sends a man to hell;
Ta-zet spoils the saint as well.

It is a sort of religious *Pons Asinorum*.

Besides prosecuting his religious studies, the shin is required also to attend on the pon-gyis and minister to their wants. He must lay before them at fixed times their daily food, the proper supply of water, the well-used betel-box, and whatever else the monk may require. He must of course go round every morning with the other members of the monastery, the begging-bowl strapped round his neck, accepting meekly, without word of thanks, or glance thrown to the right or left, even when he passes his father's house, the food poured in by the pious. When a pon-gyi goes abroad the neophyte may be required to follow, carrying his fan or umbrella, or perhaps an arm-load of palm-leaf books, if a function is to be performed anywhere. According to the strict letter of the law the ko-yin ought to eat only of the food presented in the morning, but a very great laxity has crept in in this respect, not only with the neophytes, but even among the professed members of the order. It is no uncommon thing for the parents of the youth to send in daily a special meal for him, or even, in the case of wealthy families, actually to keep a cook on the monastic premises to prepare his food. Such sybaritism is not by any means uncommon in Lower Burma, though even there hardly approved of. In any good monastery in Upper Burma, or

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a monk is liable to commit. The ninth refers to the common Oriental dislike to any person of insufficient dignity occupying an elevated place physically above worthier people.

So far, then, the shin is not very grievously burdened in the monastery. But the discipline maintained is very strict. None of the ko-yins or of the boarder-pupils must be out of the monastic limits after the bell has rung. A lay scholar may get permission from the kyaung po-go to sleep at home now and again, but this indulgence is naturally impossible to the neophyte; he must always stay in the monastery. Again, the boarders may run home in the afternoon to get some dinner at their parents' houses, but this the shin cannot do. Breaches of the rules are very severely punished. The culprit's hands are tied high above his head to a post, and the castigator lays on vigorously on the naked back with a stout bamboo. Cases of deliberate cruelty of course occasionally happen, for human nature is the same everywhere, and a Dotheboys Hall is not an entire figment; but they are rare, and on the whole the shin is happy in the monastery, and occasionally in later life looks back with regret to the old, quiet, unruffled, careless life of the pon-gyi kyaung.

In Upper Burma it has actually been his school, for but very few adopt the system of having private teachers to instruct their children; and in Lower Burma it probably contrasts favourably with the uncomfortable hard benches and desks of the English institution, and the still more irksome quietness demanded, and steady, prolonged application exacted by the English teacher. Those who have been to both remember most fondly the long dusky monastery school-room, where they sat on the floor and shouted out their lessons, and now and again slipped out into the air to take the stiffness out of their limbs with a quarter of an hour at chin lôn, Burmese football. In the English school you learned to make money; in the Burmese school you learned to be happy and contented.

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CHAPTER NINE

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MEN of my father's generation followed a definite pattern in the stages of their lives. They passed their infancy and early childhood playing around their mother's knee, but as soon as they were capable of receiving spiritual influence and training, the atmosphere of the monastery and the men of religion enwrought them. Thus their spiritual life began at the monastery. After they left it they spent many stages in the world of offices and money-earning, but none of them could be reconciled to this as the final stage of their lives. They hoped to leave this when they were fifty or soon after, and go back full circle to spending the twilight in the atmosphere of religion, before they went out finally in childish decay to another and better existence. The retirement from the civil service was therefore a very important point in my father's life. The English term "pensioner" has come to be incorporated into popular Burmese usage, as *pin-sin tha-ma*, so full of meaning is it. Most men at this time look about for a town which will ensure easy living and performance of meritorious deeds, in which to settle down. We went back to Thaton because of our family connections, but, as it happened, Thaton was also the most noted town in Burma for the settling of *pin-sin tha-mas*; it was indeed the pensioner's paradise.

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Thaton is a very old town. From the fifth to the tenth century A.D. it flourished as the centre of a Buddhist kingdom of Talaings, while the greater Burmese capital at Pagan was still without the true faith. There the Burmese King and the people were under the sway of a body of monks called the *Aris*, whose hypnotic influence was exercised through the practice of ritualistic observances contrary to the teachings of the Buddha and of which they set themselves to be the high priests. To this capital came a Buddhist monk from Thaton called Shin Arahan. He came into the presence of the King with his staff and a simple robe and the stamp of an ascetic life on his face, but also with the serene assurance that a monk's life ennobled any man beyond all other men, for he went up to the throne of the King and sat upon it. King Angwrahta asked, "What is the true teaching of this holy religion, and where can one get its Books?" Shin Arahan then told the King of the Buddhist kingdom of Thaton and the sacred scriptures which were there. The King of Pagan sent messengers to Thaton for copies of the scriptures, but the proud King at Thaton would not yield them. The

becoming common. Borrowing money is always such a shameful thing⁴⁵² to Burmans that highly usurious rates prevail. The minimum rate of these private money-lenders is Re. 1/8 per Rs. 100/- per month, i.e. 18% per annum.

But this emphasis on money-making during the retirement period¹⁸¹ was not pure avariciousness. It was connected with the ability to discharge the duties of a parent and a good Buddhist during one's last years,⁵⁹³ to have sufficient means to settle children in a good marriage, which is one of the duties laid down for a good parent, and to make many donations towards pagodas, resthouses and monasteries, all as a foundation for a rebirth into a better existence.

For men like my father, this last period of their lives was a soft and⁸⁸⁷ gentle immersion in the atmosphere which pervaded their childhood in¹⁷⁷ the monastery, and which had been banished into a memory with the years of English education, government posts, courts and litigation, and the rearing of children whose future must be bound up with the obtaining of better government posts.

During these years, my father continued his daily prayers before⁸⁸⁷ the altar, but they were short and he said them softly, his feet were shod⁷⁸⁸ with shoes and socks, his tourings took him to headmen's houses more often than to monasteries, his evenings were spent in playing tennis instead of chinlon, and drinking lime-juice instead of coconut water, and his houses of the regulation pattern were filled with cane furniture made⁵⁹³ by convicts in jails. What a far cry from the dim light on wooden floors and pillars, the steady chorus of young monks at prayers. My father, who during his working years had encouraged us to eat, laugh and be merry in each present moment, now dismayed us with a sudden conviction of the vanity of all worldly things, towns, society, dress and ornament. We woke up at dawn to the sound of his prayers, and on¹²² most mornings he walked out of the town to the hills where the monasteries and resthouses were gathered; he walked barefoot again with great enjoyment in those quiet grounds, turned aside to supervise the building of a *thein*, a house for the ordination and meditation of monks, which he had persuaded a more wealthy friend to endow. He no longer showered on us de luxe editions of Western encyclopaedias and the collected works of Dickens and Scott as he used to, but bought richly carved book cases and sacred books for the monasteries in Thaton. We no longer ate our meals on chairs, sitting up at a table, but at a low round table on the polished floor. My father sat cross legged, but he could not go back to eating with his fingers, he still used a spoon and fork. At nights we fell asleep to the sound of his prayers and it was like a benediction. Buddhist prayers in Burma consist of two parts: the first is a

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887 long recitation of precepts and lauds, mostly in Pali and not intelligible
 788 to the casual ear. The second part, the *hsu-taung*, is the asking for
 593 blessings in a formula which asks: "May (my mother) be blessed.
 177 May (a married couple) have long life together." My father worked
 98 through a list of all his and my mother's relations and connections.
 Going down in order of seniority he fitted them all into a rhythm and we
 came to know the place of each in this melodious chant. When we were
 young we sometimes waited with bated breath for the turn of a relation
 who had just quarrelled with my parents, but my father never omitted to
 ask for blessings on him. We loved this part of our parents' prayers.
 Uncles, first and second cousins whom we did not see for long stretches



of time, were kept familiar in this way. Relationships were prefixed to each name; births, deaths and marriages were registered, the infant cousins added, the newly-dead aunts omitted, and the new niece-at-law joined in a long and happy life to her husband. We loved especially our own place in the litany—my sisters, because they were given their full and correct names by which they were never called, and I, because I was an exception, called even in this formal litany by the affectionate name my parents had for me. "*Tha Maung Sett Kaing*," my father, would chant, "*Tha Maung Sett Kaing, Tha-mi Mamie, Tha-mi Ma Mya Thin, Tha-mi Ma Hin Aye, Tha-mi Ma Myat Kyi*: Son Succeeding and Lasting, Daughter Mamie, Daughter Fragrant Emerald, Daughter Cool as the Dew, Daughter Noble and Clear."

Most of the pensioners lived a similar life to my father's at this time. It was indicative of the contentment of their retired existence that they